



25,000,000

Latinas live in the United States

Of the **8,218** seats in state and national political office, only

92
are held by Latinas

You're right: that's about 1%.







We're appalled, too.

LatinasRepresent is a joint initiative of **Political Parity**
and the **National Hispanic Leadership Agenda** to
call out the lack of elected Latina leaders and
change the political landscape.





“It’s **EMPOWERING** being a Latina now.

It’s empowering to say,

‘I’m first generation.

I’m a child of immigrants.

And we can do this.’”

Latina political activist, New Mexico





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NO Latina has ever served
in the US Senate



0 Senators

Only **ONE** Latina has served
as governor



1 Governor





FOREWORD

It was on the road during the recent elections, traversing the nation's varied communities, that we realized our country itself is at a crossroads. State after state, in cities and suburbs, we witnessed a groundswell of support among women and minorities for America's first African-American president.

Yet, while both groups are courted as voters, they're still **not encouraged as elected leaders**. Latinas in particular are largely absent at every level of government: they represent just 1.6 percent of Congress and 1.1 percent of state legislators.

For a nation that **prides itself on inclusion**, that's frankly unacceptable. Our very democracy is in question when our legislative bodies look nothing like the diverse constituencies of our country.

LatinasRepresent is about much more than fairness. We're in a pivotal moment in history when critical issues affecting all Americans are being debated. Our nation needs **100 percent of our talent** to find solutions. Every voice must inform the decision-making process.

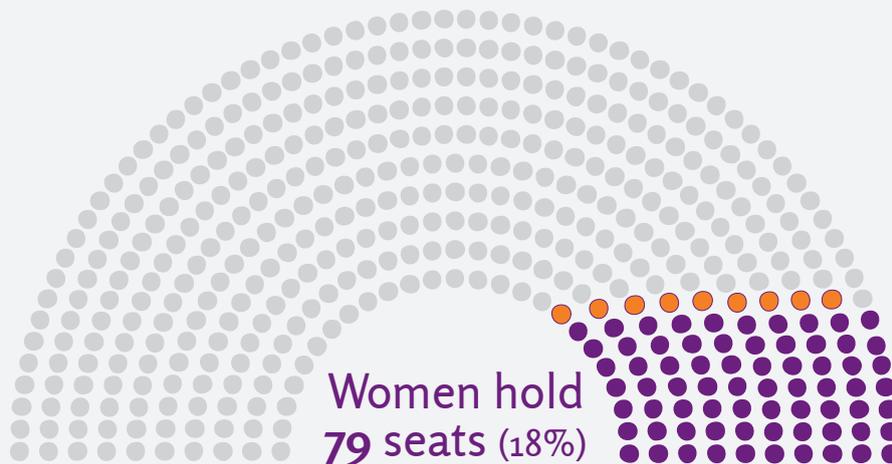
Ambassador Swanee Hunt
Chair, Political Parity
Founder, Hunt Alternatives Fund

Hector Sanchez
Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda
Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement





Of the **435** seats in the House of Representatives



Women hold
79 seats (18%)

Latinas just
9 seats (2%)



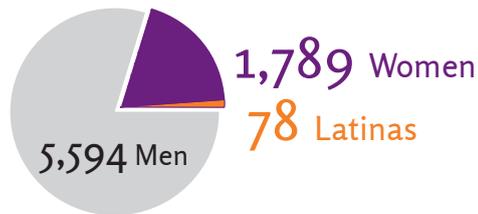


INTRODUCTION

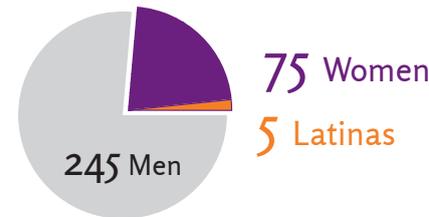
Women’s political representation in this country has long lagged behind that of men. Even at today’s historic levels, women hold only 99 of 535 seats in Congress, a mere 18 percent. At this rate of growth, it will take literally two centuries for women to reach 51 percent of Congress, mirroring society.

Imagine the equation for Latinas. A rapidly growing share of the population, Latinas represent barely 1 percent of officeholders at every level of government. Even with rising influence in our culture, communities, and at the ballot box, Latinas are dramatically underrepresented politically.

Of the **7,383** state senators and representatives, **78** (1.1%) are Latina



Of **320** statewide executives, **5** (1.5%) are Latina



Statewide executives include governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state



LatinasRepresent is changing this reality.

We're conducting **research**;

Uniting stakeholders and communities;

Lifting up **effective strategies** and models of success;

Emboldening Latina candidates and elected leaders; and

Driving a **national conversation** about the need for Latina representation.



PARTNERS

Our allies include a growing list of National Advisory Council members:

- ▶ **Cristóbal Alex**, President, Latino Victory Foundation
- ▶ **Ruben Barrales**, President and CEO, GROW Elect
- ▶ **Christina Bejarano**, Author, *The Latina Advantage: Gender, Race, and Political Success*
- ▶ **Araceli Campos**, President, Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women
- ▶ **Ingrid Duran**, Co-founder, Poder PAC
- ▶ **Maya Harris**, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress and Visiting Scholar, Harvard Law School
- ▶ **Elsa Holguin**, Senior Program Officer, Rose Community Foundation
- ▶ **Maria Teresa Kumar**, CEO and President, Voto Latino
- ▶ **Catherine Pino**, Co-founder, Poder PAC
- ▶ **Helen Torres**, Executive Director and CEO, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)
- ▶ **Susannah Wellford**, Board Chair, Running Start



**“In my district there’s never been a representative of color.
Imagine, on the border of California and Mexico,
to never have a Latina or a Latino ...
representing the area.**

**Power is not given up, power ultimately is taken.
You have to jump in and say ...
‘We’re going to do something.’”**

Congressman Juan Vargas





RESEARCH

We set out to know

Why so few Latinas in political office?

We **looked** at the numbers.

We **listened**,

meeting with hundreds of Latina leaders and candidates
to understand their challenges.

We're **leading change**,

focusing national attention on the need
for a democracy that reflects the diversity of our country.





“Women, *especialamente Latinas* ...
have the ability to **work twice as hard.**”

Congresswoman Grace Napolitano





Methodology

Political Parity supports game-changing research to test innovative ideas and strengthen our understanding of strategies to elect women to high-level political office. Katherine Archuleta served as a researcher and consultant with Political Parity Research Fellow Shauna Shames, PhD Candidate in the Department of Government at Harvard University.

Interviews

We gleaned personal perspectives about the barriers to Latina representation through more than 50 original interviews of Latina elected officials, including members of Congress, candidates, community leaders, and political actors.

Focus Groups

We also conducted 16 focus groups of high-propensity voters from cities around the country, especially in areas with substantial Hispanic populations, for a total of more than 150 participants.

Surveys

Our strategies for change to remake the political landscape are informed through our research, as well as statistical analysis of original survey data on more than 2000 people from 2012 and 2013.

Statistical Analysis and Case Studies

We also analyzed data on the race/ethnicity of Congressional members and their constituents in all 435 House districts and conducted case studies of three success stories of organizations designed to recruit, train, and support underrepresented candidates.





“Women I’ve approached about running for office
always think, *‘Gee, me?’*

And when you approach men they say,
‘Of course I could do that.’

There’s this **confidence gap**,
and Latinas are **more than qualified**.
They just need to **recognize their value.**”

Congresswoman Linda Sanchez





KEY FINDINGS AND SOLUTIONS

We believe
Every problem has a solution.

All women face challenges as candidates and elected leaders.
Our research shows that Latinas deal with additional barriers,
intersecting gender and race.

They also have **tremendous opportunity for change.**





“There are a lot of leaders in our community ...
who don’t necessarily think of themselves
as leaders until we tell them ...
Women are inspired by other women.”

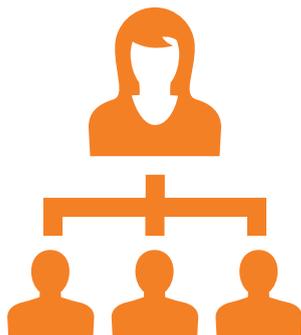
Latina legislative aide, Arizona





MENTOR

Steward future leaders



TARGET

Focus on majority-minority districts



RECRUIT

Build a path and a pipeline





“It doesn’t do any good to have a pipeline
if no one knows the way in.”

You’ve got to have **somebody to lean on,**
and **ongoing training** to get to that point.”

Latina political activist, Colorado





MENTOR



Statistically Speaking

Latinas hold only 92 of the 8,218 seats in state and national political office. Over the course of our nation's history, some 12,000 Members have served in Congress. **Only 10 Latinas.**



Simply Put

Latinas are one of the **fastest-growing populations**. Yet there aren't many Latina political leaders to mentor a new generation and capitalize on this momentum to dramatically increase their political representation.



Strategy for Change

Identify role models who demonstrate that a political career is attainable for Latinas. Ask community and national leaders to encourage young women, candidates, and elected leaders to get involved, stay involved, and ascend to high-level office. Promote "succession planning," where an elected Latina helps another fill her seat when she leaves office.



Strategy for Change

Find peer stewards, colleagues who champion and support Latinas' journeys from campaign to Congress. Political leaders can explain the nuts and bolts of public service, from raising funds to raising issues to raising children while in office.





“When Latinas get involved in politics,
they come with an **ADVOCATE’S HEART**,
as opposed to power building.”

Helen Torres, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality





MENTOR



Statistically Speaking

There are hundreds of groups working to elect female political leaders and dozens advancing Latino leadership in general.



Simply Put

There's no **national organization** focused exclusively on increasing Latina political representation.



Strategy for Change

Develop and support organizations that will catalyze Latinas into a powerful political force, both as candidates and voters.



Strategy for Change

Build expanded infrastructure to provide specialized training, establish networks for fundraising, elect candidates, retain Latinas in office, and transition others to higher office.



“I think the chances are **equal** for Latinas.
They might even have an advantage
because...the **female vote** right now
is **determining many elections**
all across the country.”

Latino state legislator, Nevada





TARGET



Statistically Speaking

Eight of the nine Latinas currently in Congress represent “majority-minority” districts, where racial/ethnic minorities make up the greatest percentage of the population.



Simply Put

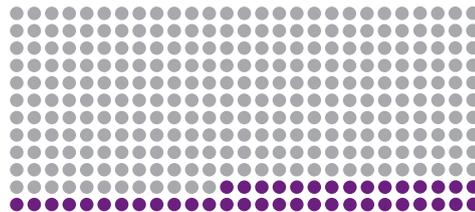
Female and minority candidates are **much more successful** in majority-minority districts.



Strategy for Change

Match and run Latina candidates in districts where they’re most likely to win.

Majority-White Districts, 325 seats



 13% Women

Majority-Minority Districts, 110 seats



 31% Women



“We need to continue supporting organizations that **reach out** to young women, and begin at an early age, so Latinas grow up knowing this [**POLITICS**] is an option.”

Latina state legislator, Nevada





TARGET



Statistically Speaking

Only 50 percent of eligible Latinos actually vote. And only 50 percent of Hispanic-majority districts are represented by a Hispanic Member of Congress, compared to more than 90 percent for other ethnicities.



Simply Put

If more Latinos vote, **more Latinas will be elected** to office. There are opportunities for Latinas to run in Hispanic-majority districts without current Hispanic representation.



Strategy for Change

Make the electoral case to Latino voters — we deserve and can build a reflective democracy.



“Never give up. **Set your sights high.**
Become known in your community. Volunteer.
Be that **change agent** in your community
and make your dreams come true.
Sometimes, the only barriers we have
are the ones we set for ourselves.”

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen





RECRUIT



Statistically Speaking

Latino culture greatly values community over individual attainment. Latinas, like most women, don't typically self-nominate. Generally, women must be asked seven times to run for office, while men of equal or lesser qualifications consider themselves ready to run.



Simply Put

It's **difficult to recruit and retain** Latina political leaders, who often believe they can do more good in community leadership roles, rather than political ones.



Strategy for Change

Develop specialized training programs for local leaders and younger Latinas to encourage their political aspirations and guide them in all stages of the process, from candidacy to election to high-level office.



Strategy for Change

Encourage national and state political parties to recruit and support Latina candidates, channel resources (both political and financial) into their campaigns, and more actively engage female and minority voters.





CONCLUSION

Research provides clarity. Strategies give direction. Conviction, courage, and commitment provoke true change. We're driving a national dialogue about the need for Latina representation.

LatinasRepresent will:

- Encourage **advocacy and action**.
- Share models** of success.
- Promote new alliances that **amplify support** for candidates.
- Embolden Latinas** to serve as elected representatives.

Join us in building a reflective democracy.





If you're a Latina:

- ☑ Consider **running for office**.
- ☑ Ask a community leader or elected official to serve as a **mentor**.
- ☑ Explore **opportunities for leadership** and political training.

Everyone has a role:

- ☑ Encourage Latina leaders in your community to think about **public service** — ask them seven times if necessary!
- ☑ **Send this message** to family, friends, and neighbors.
- ☑ Write your elected officials, requesting their support in **changing the political landscape** to one that reflects all Americans.
- ☑ Visit LatinasRepresent.org.
- ☑ Make a video calling out the opportunities for more elected Latinas and add your voice to the conversation.
- ☑ Tweet our research, share stats and solutions, and sign up for news and developments.



Millions of VOICES. One VISION.

Represent.



www.latinasrepresent.org

#LatinasRepresent

