

2025 FEDERAL POLICY SERIES INTRODUCTION

The 119th Congress and the new Administration have triggered dynamic and often forceful debates on the direction of national policy. From economic opportunity to immigration to health care, these debates are poised to trigger drastic reorganizations of American life in ways that are likely to influence Latino communities in particular. At a time when Latino issues are front and center, Hispanic Federation's summer policy series provides an opportunity for decision-makers across the federal landscape to hear directly from the Latino community regarding their values and policy priorities. The 2025 Federal Policy Series will focus on nine issues important to Latinos across the United States, with standalone chapters published throughout the summer, each addressing a specific challenge faced by the Latino community.

As the nation's premier Latino nonprofit membership organization, Hispanic Federation works directly with its network of 850 organizations across 43 states and territories, including Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia and the US Virgin Islands; the policy proposals outlined in this series are reflective of this depth of community experience.

Hispanic Federation's greatest strength lies in its deep roots in Latino communities and relationships with grassroots leaders, nonprofits, public officials, policymakers, media, small business owners, and private sector leaders. Our policy and advocacy work aims to advance Latino opportunity and equity by focusing on three pillars: Civil Rights, Justice, Equity, and Empowerment. Our methodology in driving policy change is to work with community on the ground to identify inequities and develop solutions. Latinos are a dynamic and diverse population that is actively reshaping the course of this nation. Latinos/Latinas/Latines/Latinx can be Black, White, Indigenous, Asian, Arab and/or Mestizo, among other ethnicities. As such, the recommendations embedded within our summer policy series are wide-ranging, covering everything from civil rights to housing, and outline proposals grounded in research and experience to support communities from rural farm workers to urban businessowners and everyone in between.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"We the people in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

That sentence serves as the preamble and mission statement to the U.S. Constitution. It is enshrined on parchment, in textbooks, and in national memory. Its promises are a statement of purpose for our nation that have captured the imagination of generations. The revolutionary promise of American Independence was that a government anchored in popular sovereignty and representative principles would empower each of its inhabitants to pursue their hopes, dreams, and ambitions. The subsequent belief that such a society could not merely only endure but thrive has become known as the American Experiment. These ideals have inspired millions over centuries to come to the United States to create new lives. While often forgotten, Latinos have been essential to this vision throughout American history, fighting for rights, freedom, and fueling prosperity at each step along the road. Their journeys and experiences, then and now, fuel Hispanic Federation's commitment to democracy and civil rights.

The pursuit of civil rights is essential to the American Experiment, encapsulated in the phrase "a more perfect union." From John Adams and Frederick Douglas to Cesar Chavez and Lupe Anguiano, the American story has been written by those who dreamed of a world better than their own and invested those hopes into the United States. Each expansion of civil rights, from voting to business to marriage, has been a hard won but vital step in expanding the American Dream beyond those

privileged few who initially ratified the Constitution. This work remains incomplete however, with lingering inequities in ballot access, data representation, and civil rights, to say nothing of the inequitable treatment of American citizens living in the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico.

FROM JOHN ADAMS AND FREDERICK DOUGLAS TO CESAR CHAVEZ AND LUPE ANGUIANO, THE AMERICAN STORY HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY THOSE WHO DREAMED OF A WORLD BETTER THAN THEIR OWN AND INVESTED THOSE HOPES INTO THE UNITED STATES.

Since its founding, Hispanic Federation has

underscored the importance of civic engagement in our mission to advance and empower the Latino community in the United States. That's why we have registered millions of Latino voters since 1990 while providing crucial nonpartisan information on how elections impact our communities in a culturally competent way. As the federal government proceeds through a new year, a new Congress, and a new administration, Hispanic Federation is eager to collaborate with decisionmakers to increase civic participation and grow civil rights for all in our pursuit of a more perfect union.

SITUATION REPORT

The Latino community is rapidly approaching 20% of the U.S. population and comprises almost 25% of the adolescent population. Nevertheless, Latinos face persistent challenges to their civil rights, including restricted civic access, inadequate electoral and demographically proportionate representation, unequal access to quality education and health services, threats to public safety, and so much more. Over the three elections from 2018 to 2022, 47% of eligible Latino voters sat out, compared to 24% of white eligible voters. In the 2024 election, only 50.6% of eligible Latino voters cast a ballot while 70.5% of non-Hispanic white voters cast a ballot in that same election. While Hispanic voting rates remain on a gradually upward trajectory, both voting and registration rates among eligible Latinos remain significantly below those of all other racial and ethnic groups tracked by the Census. These statistics illustrate the vibrant potential for growth in Latino civic engagement.

Likewise, while the Latino population comprises some 13% of the eligible electorate, and roughly 11% of the electorate in 2020, Latinos themselves were only roughly 1% of federal, state, and local elected officials.⁴ Racially-discriminatory gerrymandering, of course, is and has been illegal since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965,⁵ while the courts have held that the Fifteenth Amendment also prohibits racially discriminatory districting.⁶ Nonetheless, Latino voters remain underrepresented in the halls of power. Moreover, civil rights across the board are facing a new era of uncertainty as novel interpretations of Constitutional protections collide with long-established norms.

It is therefore crucial at this juncture that policymakers reinvest in civil rights that ensure liberties essential to our democratic republic remain unimpeded, including voting rights, protection from discrimination, and effective representation. Threats old and new, from the use of discriminatory algorithms to criminal activity, present disproportionate challenges to the growing Latino community in the United States. Meanwhile, tools like the census and traditional law enforcement are falling behind in the face of novel, decentralized 21st century problems. Hispanic Federation proposes a range of measures, from affirmative data equity to democratic modernization to ensure that the foundational rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness will continue to flourish in the new American century.

ASKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Voting and Civic Engagement

- **Voter Registration:** Successful participation in our democratic republic begins with lawful and equitable access to voter registration. Hispanic Federation is unequivocally committed to ensuring that all eligible voters are afforded every opportunity to exercise their patriotic franchise. Congress should provide pilot and transitional funding to states seeking to implement automatic voter registration without impinging upon states' constitutional authority to determine the manner of their own elections, according to researched best practices. Hispanic Federation urges Congress to support safe and secure automatic voter registration.
- Voting Roll Maintenance: Voter roll purges have increasingly targeted Latino communities across the United States.⁸ Recent practices have tended to be untransparent, sudden, and overly aggressive, even to the point of removing citizens who routinely vote.⁹ Many of these purges have been ruled unlawful by federal judges. It is therefore incumbent upon the federal government to provide guidelines for fair practices by

VOTER ROLL PURGES HAVE INCREASINGLY TARGETED LATINO COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.8

which illegal voter purges may be prevented, ensuring that every eligible, registered voter is allowed to cast their ballot. **Hispanic Federation demands that Congress take steps to prevent unlawful voter purges.**

- Early and Mail-In Voting: According to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), nearly thirty percent of ballots cast in 2024 were submitted by mail. Independent research has illustrated three key facts about expansion of voting modes. The first is that approaches like universal vote-by-mail are effective at increasing voting rates. The second is that expanded voting methods does not appear to produce a partisan advantage or to disproportionately favor age groups. The third is that these modes are safe, reliable, and secure. As states like New York and Connecticut have made such measures permanent with advocacy from Hispanic Federation and our partners, they have born the fruits of increased voter engagement: more representative government and greater cooperation between residents and elected officials. HF encourages the federal government to maintain mail-in, absentee, and early voting, and to support those states exploring such franchise expansions.
- Election Integrity: Americans have a right to secure elections and ballot procedures they can trust. However, many proposed measures like the SAVE Act and the Election Integrity Act will only undermine ballot access without addressing meaningful electoral challenges. Therefore, Hispanic Federation implores Congress to reject unnecessary and burdensome new legislation and instead provide resources for state and local election officials to focus on enforcing current laws that have proven effective at preventing election fraud for generations.
- **Protection from Gerrymandering:** The American public is largely united in opposing districting practices that permit elected officials to choose their voters, rather than voters choosing their representatives. An Nonetheless, partisan gerrymandering continues to be widespread, with some states outright defying voter-led ballot initiatives to limit partisan gerrymandering or implement independent, nonpartisan redistricting committees. Furthermore, American political alignment ensures that partisan gerrymandering remains hopelessly entangled with illegal racial gerrymandering. The nation must move to a uniform, independent, nonpartisan districting standard to limit potential abuses and safeguard the integrity of American elections. **Hispanic Federation urges the federal government to take steps to ensure voters are protected from gerrymandering, including by expanding Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.**

- Modern Voting Rights Legislation: Contemporary data analytic tools have made it more important than ever to update voting protections. It has become increasingly possible for actors of any partisan persuasion to adopt voting practices that marginally penalize or reward certain voting patterns or demographics. In turn, judiciary oversight of voting practices must be restored in ways that delimit possible abuses by those of any political party. New tests for voting rights consideration outlined under *Shelby Co. v Holder* have clarified the judicial limitations to current voting rights legislation. Consequently, Hispanic Federation ardently recommends Congress pass new legislation that reinvigorates and strengthens the protections provided by the Voting Rights Act.
- Voting and Citizenship: Hispanic Federation ardently opposes recently introduced legislation and executive actions to require prospective voters to provide documentation of citizenship before registering to vote. For more than a century, noncitizens have been expressly barred from voting in federal elections. Furthermore, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 codified doing so as a federal crime. Recently proposed measures like the SAVE Act would impose an unfunded mandate making it harder for U.S. citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Voters of color, married women, and rural voters would all be disproportionately barred from voting under these requirements.¹⁷ Hispanic Federation implores legislators to reject unnecessary and costly efforts to restrict voting access from legitimate voters.
- **Birthright Citizenship:** The Fourteenth Amendment enshrined birthright citizenship as the law of the land.¹⁸ It is a hard-won reward from the era of Reconstruction, whose application to all who are born on U.S. soil has been the reality of American citizenship for almost two centuries and affirmed by SCOTUS precedent. Unfortunately, the current administration has promulgated an executive order seeking to eliminate universal birthright citizenship.¹⁹

THE ELIMINATION OF BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP VIA EXECUTIVE ORDER IS NOT ONLY ILLEGAL BUT WOULD ALSO BE DISASTROUS.

This order has been blocked by several federal judges who have excoriated its provisions, clarifying that the elimination of birthright citizenship via executive order is not only illegal²⁰ but also would be disastrous. **Hispanic Federation demands that all branches of the federal government preserve and defend birthright citizenship.**

Representation

• The Census: The census is one of the most crucial operations conducted by the U.S. government.²¹ It determines Congressional representation and guides policy from appropriations for social programs to federal responses on issues ranging from natural disaster to national security. Nonetheless, the Latino community is routinely overlooked by the federal census, with the 2020 Census estimated to have undercounted Latinos by almost 5%.²² The Census must be empowered to ensure an accurate count for all. Existing data collection methods and continuous monitoring already provide sufficient and timely information to assess progress and make informed decisions. The national census is therefore an effective and productive use of our nation's resources. Consequently, we urge fully funding the Census Bureau for an amount no less than its requested budget, to ensure that minority and rural communities are accurately counted. Hispanic Federation demands that the Census be fortified for generations to come via expanded funding, preservation of repeated knock requirements, mid-cycle surveys, and the maintenance of questions that ascertain the welfare of vulnerable populations.

- Although discussed for decades, Census authorities have intentionally declined to add a citizenship question to the decennial count.²³ Hispanic Federation opposes the addition of a question about citizenship status in the Census. Its inclusion would increase costs, lower response rates, and exacerbate inaccurate population counts, thereby misdirecting resources for vital services.²⁴ It would in turn undermine the Census's obligation to "count each person in our country whether citizen or noncitizen once, only once, and in the right place."²⁵ Hispanic Federation exhorts federal officials to reject any calls for the Census to include citizenship questions.
- Likewise, we advocate for the elimination of barriers that prevent our communities in Puerto Rico from being counted in the 2030 Census. Additionally, we encourage relevant agencies to obtain better economic data about Puerto Rico and to ensure that Puerto Rico is included in the "American Housing Survey." Hispanic Federation is adamant that all U.S. states and territories, including Puerto Rico, must be included in essential Census operations.
- Judicial Nominations: Without a representative judiciary, it is impossible for the Latino community to systematically receive rulings that incorporate our perspectives and knowledge or understand our needs. President Biden appointed roughly one-third of all active Latino lifetime judges. Hispanic Federation calls for the nomination of qualified judges who reflect the breadth of experience, ideologies, and priorities of all American communities, Latinos included.
 - Furthermore, we encourage Senators to consult with leading community members from
 Latino groups, neighborhoods, and organizations in drafting their blue-slip opinions to
 guarantee that such opinions take into consideration the perspectives of our communities.
 Hispanic Federation urges Senators to ensure that the judicial nominees they approve
 are truly representative of the populations whose districts they are nominated to
 adjudicate.
- **Disability Rights and Access:** The expansion of civil rights law to encompass the disabled community under provisions like the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 was a triumph of bipartisan investment in communities long underserved by our nation's infrastructure and economy. Today, Congress has a continued responsibility to uphold and strengthen these protections. This responsibility includes reaffirming and expanding safeguards against disparate impacts and broadening the scope of covered definitions to include other vulnerable communities that remain without legal protections. **Hispanic Federation calls upon Congress to reinvest in the protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act.**
- Data Equity in Federal Research: The modern world runs on data and algorithms. However, federal data guidelines relating to race and data are inconsistent. Indeed, there remain federal agencies whose publicly reported data do not disaggregate ethnicity from race, effectively rendering the Latino community invisible. Even when terms like "Hispanic" or "Latino" are used, many data sets rarely capture the breadth of the Latino community, with varying problems and needs depending on cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Hispanic Federation calls upon the federal government to ensure that executive and legislative staffing and regional committees are instructed to pursue compositions matching those of the populations they serve.²⁶

Rights and Safety

- Safe Firearm Storage: Hispanic Federation urges the expansion of and funding for safe firearm storage programs to provide American households with the means to reduce risks of undue harm to themselves and their communities. Programs funding safe storage devices including gun safes, monitoring devices, and re-registration programs enjoy bipartisan popularity and are successful with new and long-term gunowners alike, suggesting a promising avenue to reduce preventable and tragic gun-related deaths. Hispanic Federation exhorts Congress to provide funding for safe firearm storage initiatives across the country.
- Firearms and Mental Health: Approximately 37% of Latino gun deaths are suicides.²⁷ This tragic reality highlights the need for urgent mental health services with a focus on immediate violence prevention. Preexisting programs like the suicide prevention hotline require greater funding to reduce wait-times and ensure that callers may be directed to linguistically and culturally competent interlocutors.²⁸ Likewise, expanded coverage and funding for mental health will provide critical resources that would work toward self-harm prevention. Hispanic Federation entreats the federal government to redouble its commitment to mental health and expand red flag laws and other psychiatric bars to firearm access to mitigate the risks of self-harm that stem from the intersections of poor mental health and firearm access.
- **Ghost Guns:** The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives' (ATF) expansion of means-based policing including the tracking of crime guns and targeting the proliferation of ghost guns has yielded success at hindering the most severe offenders.²⁹ While the vast majority of American gunowners are law-abiding hobbyists or concerned citizens who purchase their firearms legally and follow requisite registration steps the growing proliferation of ghost guns by nefarious actors risks precipitously setting back public safety efforts. By focusing on those who explicitly circumvent such regulations, federal law enforcement has been able to target those disinclined to follow other federal statutes, including against violent acts; these efforts should be renewed. **Hispanic Federation demands that lifesaving, crimestopping work monitoring ghost and crime guns be maintained.**
- Incarcerated Rights: Latino individuals are incarcerated at a rate 4 times higher than that of non-Hispanic whites.³⁰ Consequently, the Latino community is disproportionately exposed to abuses within the carceral system, including wage theft, services fraud, and eroding civil rights. These civil rights failings are only magnified in the face of documented racially and ethnically discriminatory practices within U.S. prisons.³¹ Abuses are only exacerbated within the juvenile carceral system. For far too long, the use of capricious and punitive tools like solitary confinement has been permitted despite well-documented adverse effects.³² Likewise, researchers and activists have documented for decades widespread instances of sexual assault in prisons.³³ with one ultimately likening its persistent prevalence to a "modern corollary of slavery."³⁴ Congress must modernize civil rights protections for incarcerated individuals, not only be addressing these most flagrantly heinous of abuses, but also by enhancing access to basic environmental protections like air conditioning,³⁵ augmented proactive rights compliance checks and the oversight powers of independent watchdogs. Hispanic Federation implores that Congress pass new legislation bringing the rights of the incarcerated into the 21st century.
- Community Safety Reform: The raft of firearm-facilitated violence that has emerged in the United States risks infringing upon vulnerable communities' civil rights to safe and healthy environments. Community policing has proven effective at forging partnerships between local communities and law enforcement officers (LEOs), thereby proactively preventing crime, establishing trust between vulnerable and at-risk communities and law enforcement and reducing the costs of law enforcement.³⁶ While the majority of Latinos feel confident in their local LEO's, their confidence in and support for local law enforcement remains below non-Hispanic white peers, suggesting the clear need for further trust-building reforms.³⁷

Funding pilot and expansion programs for community-based policing would facilitate these goals. Likewise, the implementation of community violence intervention (CVI) programs have contributed to a multiyear decline in violent crime rates; the most successful have reduced violent crime by 30%, while further increasing community trust in law enforcement.³⁸ Hispanic Federation urges Congress to reinvest in programs like community policing and community violence intervention that are proven to increase public safety for all Americans.

- Gun Shows and Background Checks: It remains a tragic truth that one of the greatest factors facilitating categories of violence against the Latino community, including domestic violence, is the ambient availability of firearms.³⁹ For years, unscrupulous actors have exploited lax regulations surrounding the purchase of firearms to circumvent longstanding background checks and other regulatory interventions that hundreds of millions have used responsibly for decades.⁴⁰ Hispanic Federation exhorts the federal government to enact legislation closing loopholes around firearm purchase background checks and registrations, including the gun show loophole, to augment public safety.
- LGBTQ+ Rights: Despite recent advancements in legal rights and increasing social acceptance, the LGBTQ+ community continues to experience discrimination across the country. Latine LGBTQ+ people—and especially transgender Latine people—face increasingly stark disparities in their health and well-being when compared to non-LGBTQ+ people. Hispanic Federation is committed to protecting and expanding the rights of the Latine LGBTQ+ community. Our work through projects like the Advance Change Together (ACT) initiative⁴¹ have strengthened Latine LGBTQ+ nonprofits across the country that serve as critical lifelines for our communities. Hispanic Federation demands federal officials pursue vital measures to preserve and advance for the LGBTQ+ community including:
 - Amend preexisting civil rights law, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing
 Act of 1968, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991 to explicitly include protections based on
 sexual orientation and gender identity to ensure nondiscrimination against LGBTQ+
 populations in areas including employment, housing, public accommodations and spaces,
 and services such as banks, legal service, retail, and transportation.
 - These amendments should include renewed interpretation of Title IX to affirmatively include LGBTQ+ identities, including federal reciprocity guidance for marriages, adoptions, and gender transition.
 - Congress must take legislative steps to clarify avenues for oversight and recourse for LGBTQ+ individuals whose civil rights have been violated by those erroneously claiming a religious right to discrimination in theaters protected by civil rights law. Just as those claims were erroneous when applied to matters of race during the civil rights movement, so too are they now.
 - Proactive and reactive civil rights support for LGBTQ+ students in K12 and higher ed classrooms with an eye toward advancing belonging and attainment.
 - Likewise, Congress must act to oppose any legislation that seeks to minimize
 the appearance or participation of LGBTQ+ students or families from our nation's
 schools, including in the parental rights of LGBTQ+ parents, and participation in
 extracurricular activities and wraparound programming.
 - Support for physical and mental healthcare, including a vigorous defense against still widespread discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community from medical service providers.
 - These protections must include the proactive guarantee of access to both physical and mental gender affirming care, ensuring that government does not intervene between patients and medical practitioners tendering best-practices care.

- Likewise, it is essential that Congress act to legally indemnify medical practitioners against criminal or civil suits stemming from state or local laws that seek to restrict their ability to provide best-practice standards of care treatments to LGBTQ+ individuals, including adolescents. While these protections should not extend to practitioners plausibly accused of negligence or unscrupulous practice, Congress cannot abide the medical marginalization of vulnerable groups like the transgender population.
- Recent polling suggests that at least 7.4% of Americans affirmatively identify as LGBTQ+.42 However, the federal government inconsistently tabulates LGBTQ+ identities in data collection, even in essential areas like hate crime statistics and medical care access. It is essential that the federal government consistently and universally collects and incorporates data on LGBTQ+ individuals.
- · Research consistently and clearly confirms that the harmful and discriminatory suite of practices colloquially known as "conversion therapy" are, at best, ineffective, and more often deleterious, even amounting to "torture." 43 It is inappropriate that this senseless and cruel practice should continue; as such, Congress must take steps to ban 'conversion therapy.'
- The U.S. must restore and maintain access to humanitarian asylum for prospective LGBTQ+ asylee's seeking refuge from discriminatory regimes or hostile environments.
- Linguistic Civil Rights Protections: In 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, affirming the official policy of the executive branch that linguistic access is a covered

HISPANIC FEDERATION DEMANDS CONGRESS TAKE UP LEGISLATION **AMENDING TITLE VI (OF THE** 1964 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT) TO **CODIFY THESE LINGUISTIC** PROTECTIONS INTO LAW.

component of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.44 That order codified Supreme Court precedent and disparate executive opinions that civil rights and commensurate access to federal services were not proscribed by one's level of English proficiency. While that order has been recently rescinded, linguistic access remains protected, albeit to varying degrees across a kaleidoscopic regulatory landscape. 45 Hispanic Federation demands Congress take up legislation amending Title VI to codify these linguistic protections into law.

DATA SUPPORTING ASKS

Voting and Civic Engagement

- Going into the 2024 election, 61.5% of eligible Latino citizens were registered to vote, though not all of these went on to vote. Historically, Hispanic Federation's civic engagement programmatic work has seen effective rates of electoral participation; in past years, 88% of those registered by Hispanic Federation went on to vote.46
- Since 2016 alone, Hispanic Federation has helped 175k eligible Latinos register to vote.47
- At present, 25 states employ a version of automatic voter registration.48 These states range from California to West Virginia, highlighting that automatic voter registration enjoys bipartisan support and is feasible in both urban and rural environments.
- **TWENTY-FIVE STATES EMPLOY A VERSION OF AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION. THESE STATES RANGE FROM CALIFORNIA TO WEST VIRGINIA, HIGHLIGHTING THAT AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION ENJOYS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT**
- In point of order, it is and has been illegal for noncitizens to vote in federal elections in the U.S. for over a century, and a clearly outlined federal crime since the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.49
 - Furthermore, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 empowered the federal government to require certain information to register for federal elections, which at present includes a question affirmatively declaring U.S. citizenship under penalty of perjury, alongside a signature.50
 - Consequently, noncitizen voter registration is rare, and typically happens by accident.⁵¹
 - Furthermore, as noncitizen voting constitutes a felony, incidents of noncitizen voting remain even less common,52 and violators of the statute are typically identified swiftly.53
 - Research conducted by the Brennan Center and cited by Snopes suggests that only 66% of voting-age women "have a document with their current legal name proving citizenship" with a further ~22m people, roughly 9% of the electorate, lacking ready access to the requisite documentation, and another almost 4 million lacking them entirely not having possession of required documents.54
- The vast majority of Americans oppose districting that intends to confer partisan advantage.
 - Despite these preferences, partisan gerrymandering advances with shocking abandon; Illinois for instance in 2020 saw almost half of its state legislative races go uncontested,56 arguably courtesy of the political realities of a pro-Democratic gerrymander.⁵⁷ Similarly, research from Princeton University has found Florida's state legislative maps to be engineered to create pro-Republican partisan advantage.58 In conjunction, the two cases highlight that the issue is one that extends across party lines, hindering electoral engagement across the country.
- As of now, seven states across the political alignment have switched to independent commissions for redistricting. Nonpartisan drawn districts are more likely to be racially representative, helping address downstream racial redistricting inequities.59
- HF's own civic engagement work has confirmed that voters are more likely to be engaged if they understand what's at stake in the ballot box, including through approachable information that matches their linguistic needs and preferences. 60

 States like New York and Connecticut have made early and no-excuse absentee voting permanent with advocacy from Hispanic Federation and our partners. 61

Representation

- Hispanic Federation has long championed data equity and disaggregation and urges the federal government to build on successful state-level models to ensure more accurate, inclusive, and actionable data collection nationwide. This experience informs our exhorting the federal government to look to successful state-level programs⁶² as a model to move national data programs into the 21st century.
- HF's support for data equity has yielded results at the state level in guaranteeing appropriate representation while increasing community buy-in and cooperation with strategic initiatives. 63
- HF research confirms that data plays a critical role in shaping educational priorities and practices, particularly for new students who are either immigrants or aging into the system or both.⁶⁴
- A 2022 analysis found that fewer than 9% of lifetime appointed federal judges were Lating. despite Latinos standing at almost 20% of the total population. Simultaneously, the same report found that five of the thirteen federal circuit courts lacked any Latino judges. 65

Rights and Safety

- Approximately 400 children are involved in unintentional shootings each year in the U.S. An estimated 85% of unintentional firearm injuries among children could be prevented through responsible storage practices.66
- Latinos are disproportionately killed during encounters with police at a rate more than 1.3 times higher than non-Hispanic whites, with rates only rising.67
- The vast majority of Americans supports reforming the criminal justice and carceral systems, with strong bipartisan support for policies that reconsider approaches to nonviolent crimes, thereby permitting law enforcement to focus their efforts on pressing matters of community safety.68
- Likewise, most Latinos respect their local law enforcement and support policies enabling them to serve and protect their communities. 69
- In fact, more than 20% of federal law enforcement officers are Latino as are more than 14% of all local law enforcement.70
- Current higher education students are more likely than the general population to identify as LGBTQ+.71
- Simultaneously, Latino adults are more likely to be members of the LGBTQ+ community than other demographics.72 Likewise, a 2022 study found that Latino adults were almost twice as likely as non-Hispanic white and Black Americans to identify as LGBTQ, at 11% vs. 6.2% and 6.6%, respectively.⁷³
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community are at particular risk of facing negative mental health conditions, with incidence

LGBTQ+ LATINO COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE AT PARTICULAR RISK OF FACING NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS, WITH INCIDENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES TWICE AS HIGH AMONG THE LGB COMMUNITY AND FOUR TIMES HIGHER AMONG TRANS INDIVIDUALS.

of mental health challenges twice as high among the LGB community and four times higher among Trans individuals.74 These mental health disparities are often linked to experiences of stigma, discrimination, and social isolation.75

- Anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination has been increasing across the world, fueling a growing epidemic of displaced people. In turn, many seek the relative stability and support of the United States, though journalistic reporting affirms that many have struggled to access asylum,76 even during periods in which facilitating asylum for those fleeing anti-LGBTQ persecution was an administration priority.77
- As of 2021, there were over 1.2m LGBTQ+ immigrants in the United States, according to research from UCLA's Williams Institute. Of these, approximately 50% were Latine.78

CONCLUSION

For too long, the federal government has rested on the successes of the Civil Rights Movement, allowing essential rights and freedoms like enfranchisement, equal protection, and fair representation to stagnate. The Latino community has borne much of the weight of this stagnation. As such, Hispanic Federation has outlined here a gamut of reforms, grounded in research and popular consensus, including voter registration overhauls, advancements in community safety, and modernizing census and redistricting considerations. Each of these would have the effect of bolstering fair and equitable participation in American civic life while restoring trust and fairness in the federal government.

As our nation approaches the 250th anniversary of independence, the dynamic promise of the American Revolution is more relevant than ever. That promise of a government of, by, and for the people, premised upon a faith in the essential dignity of all persons has inspired generations not just in our own nation, but the world over. In an era of widening inequality, information overloads, and global challenges to democracy, redoubling our commitment to the foundational principles of the American republic has become more essential than ever. Reinvesting in voting access, truly representative governance, and universal civil rights protections is not only a moral obligation but a prerequisite for America's success.

Learn more about Hispanic Federation's policy priorities by scanning the QR code at right.



Endnotes

- As well as 31% of Asian and 36% of Black eligible voters.
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