
Underrepresentation Of Hispanics In Government

In such a wonderfully diverse world, it could be assumed that candidates running for office would be equally, if not more, diverse. The United States of America is founded on the idea that all men are created equal and there has always been a prominent idea of The American Dream, or the idea that the United States is a welcoming place for all immigrants searching for a new home. Since it is a place where immigrants are constantly longing to be, the cultural, societal and economic status of the country are only becoming increasingly more diverse. With those ideas in mind, it is easily noticed that the United States government is not even remotely close to having suitable political representation in coordination to residents of the country. The Hispanic population is one of the largest of all in the United States, and yet there is a huge lack of representation of that within government and politics. Although Hispanics are a minority within politics, when given the opportunity, they challenge traditional stereotypes and advocate for the working class and minorities. Alexander Acosta, the first Hispanic to hold the rank of Assistant Attorney General for civil rights and Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic justice to be confirmed onto the Supreme Court, are two examples of Hispanic politicians that use their platform to build representation and increase Civil rights of Hispanic peoples.

Political representation is the process of making the voices, opinions, and perspectives of the people present in the public policy making processes. Political actors are meant to advocate for the people. This is a key part of a democratic government. Without proper political representation, the United States is not a true Democracy. The idea of representing every individual seems unfortunately unrealistic due to how large the current American population is, but this is far from true. If a government is not representing all of the citizens currently living in it, then something needs to change. Keeping this in mind, change can be made amongst the current representatives in the federal government. The current majority of Congress is white, more specifically eighty percent of Congress. According to the United States Census Bureau, Hispanics make up 18.1% of the population, however, only 7.8% of the house is made up of Hispanic members even fewer members make up the senate with only a mere 3% Perhaps this underrepresentation is due to a lack of minority voter turnout.

There are many reasons as to why minorities, specifically Hispanics, may not have a high voter turnout. The rates of Hispanic voter turnouts have steadily been the lowest rates of all. White, non Hispanics have almost always held the highest voter turnout percentages, the only time that their rates were not the highest was in the 2008 election, where black, non Hispanic voters had 66.6% turnout as opposed to the 64.1% of whites. The Hispanic voter percentage for that same year was just short of 50%. With only 49.9% voting rates in 2008, Hispanics were at a disadvantage again. In 1980, Hispanic voter turnout was 46%, the highest the percent has ever been was in 1992 with 51.6% and only 44% the following election. The 2016 elections showed a 46.6% rate. Why is it that the Hispanic percentage has been historically low? Low income, poor education, state laws, party competition, and a low mobilization are all factors as to why there is a low voter turnout. Many people within the Hispanic population are living in poverty, receiving low incomes in subpar education systems. Knowledge is, without a doubt, one of the most important things needed in a stable government. A lack of political knowledge can be devastating for elections and without a good education system, many Hispanics are not getting what they need. Many Hispanics are left with little time to vote while they are often working to

take care of themselves and their families. Another huge factor in the low turnout is fear. Especially due to the public opinion of current president, Donald Trump, many Hispanics are afraid to show up and vote. This fear erupts from Trump's ideas on immigration along with the camps around the border to stop immigrants from entering the country. Hispanics are afraid to be discriminated against or to be accused of illegal activity, especially regarding the legal status of their residency.

Donald Trump's pick for The United States Secretary of Labor is Alexander Acosta. Acosta is the son of Cuban immigrants, Rene and Delia Acosta. Acosta assumed office on April twenty-eighth of 2017. Prior to being a member of Trump's cabinet, Acosta has served in three presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed positions. He was one of the five National Labor Relations Board members as well as an Assistant Attorney General and the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida in 2005. "After graduating from law school, he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito when he was a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit." In a majority white Congress, Acosta is a part of the minority of Hispanics appointed. Acosta has constantly gone out of his way to defend two communities that Trump has publicly criticized many times: Muslims and Hispanics. When speaking in front of a Senate judiciary committee working to fight for the rights of Muslim Americans, Acosta stated that the United States is a "nation built on principles of freedom, and high on the list of freedoms is freedom of religious expression. Indeed, as is well known to this Committee, this freedom pre-dates our Constitution." It has been widely known that President Trump has doubts about the goodness of people who identify or resemble Muslims and Hispanics. This knowledge exemplifies the unanticipated choice to appoint Acosta, someone that publicly defends them. Acosta has been named one of the nation's fifty most influential Hispanics two times by the Hispanic Business magazine. In addition to this, he was also named on the list of one hundred most influential individuals in business ethics in 2008 and was presented with the Chairman's Higher Education Award in recognition of his "outstanding achievements, leadership and determination throughout a lifetime of caring and giving back to the community" by the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in 2013. Acosta is a great example of a Hispanic who makes the most of what he is given

The first Hispanic to be confirmed onto the supreme court was Sonia Sotomayor. When she was a child, crime and gang activity increased in her neighborhood. After her father passed away, Sotomayor and her family were able to move to a nicer neighborhood and she began studying and she gained an interest in crime and detection. She was accepted into Princeton University with a full ride scholarship. Once she was there she graduated Summa Cum Laude (a Latin term that holds the highest distinction reserved only for students with perfect academic records) and won the University's Moses Taylor Pyne Prize, which is the highest honor Princeton awarded its undergraduates at the time. Sotomayor also attended Yale in 1976 after receiving this reputable award and graduating Princeton. While attending Yale, she was one of the editors for the Yale Law Journal as well as the managing editor of the law school's journal of international law. At both schools she attended, she actively spoke out for the rights of Latino students, and even urged the universities to hire more Latino faculty members. This passion for activism did not go unnoticed On May twenty-sixth of 2009, Sotomayor was escorted and introduced as a nominee for the United States Supreme Court by the President and Vice President at the time, Barack Obama and Joe Biden. She eventually replaced retiring Justice David Souter.

Sonia Sotomayor and Alexander Acosta are both perfect examples of why there needs to be

more Hispanics in the government. Out of all the Supreme Court Judges in the history of the United States, there have only been six minority judges. Out of those six judges, there has only been one Hispanic judge: Sonia Sotomayor.

Although Hispanics are not a large part of Congress, when given the opportunity, they make the most of their platform and work towards political representation for the Hispanic community.

Works Cited

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As well as providing information about the racial makeup of the The United States, The United States Census Bureau provides a series of tabulations and data products regarding the voting rates of citizens every four years. These statistics are based on age, race, and Hispanic origin. Figure 2 reports on the percentage of voting rates by race and Hispanic origin based on dates from 1980-2016.