



Via email to: DavilaM@nyassembly.gov
Honorable Assemblywoman Maritza Davila
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, Chairwoman

Via email to: prhtf@nyassembly.gov
Jonathan Harkavy
Executive Director
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force

Re: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Dear Chairwoman Davila and Executive Director Harkavy:

As you know, following the 2020 Census, New York State will embark in the decennial redistricting process to draw new lines for federal and state legislative districts. The state's Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) has been created and empowered to lead that process. The majority and minority leaders of each house of the Legislature appointed two members each to this commission, for a total of eight commissioners, none of whom are Latino or Latina. The omission of the Latino community from the commission is inconceivable given that 19% of New Yorkers are Latinos.

LatinoJustice PRLDEF, the NALEO Educational Fund, and Dominicanos USA have joined together as a coalition of Latino serving organizations to express our concern regarding the exclusion of the Latino community from the appointment process for the IRC.

LatinoJustice PRLDEF founded in 1972 as the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund is a non-partisan national civil rights legal defense fund, headquartered in New York that champions an equitable society. For 48 years, LatinoJustice PRLDEF has advocated for and defended the constitutional rights and equal protection of all Latinos under the law and has worked to secure the voting rights and political participation of Latino voters. We have been involved in state and federal litigation regarding Latino political representation and voting rights, including constitutional legal challenges to discriminatory redistricting plans or those otherwise implicating voting rights.

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading nonprofit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. Our Board members include Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. NALEO Educational Fund has actively promoted policies to ensure that Latinos can fully participate in the redistricting process, and that the resulting maps provide Latinos with fair opportunities for political representation.

Dominicanos USA is a Nonprofit and non-partisan organization committed to the civic, social, and economic integration of Dominican-Americans into the fabric of American society. DUSA strives to ensure that every U.S. citizen is able to freely exercise their civic rights, realize their full potential, and capitalize on all the opportunities the U.S. has to offer. Our contribution to making this vision a reality begins with our work in the Dominican-American community.

As you know, the redistricting process has historically disenfranchised minority communities, which makes representation on this commission critical. We hope that you will work with us to ensure that the two future appointed commissioners adequately reflect the size of the Latino community in the state. Fortunately, there is still an opportunity to appoint qualified Latinos to the two remaining seats on the commission.

For the past two months our coalition has engaged in an extensive search to identify potential Latino candidates to fill these seats, which must be occupied by New York State residents who are not enrolled in the Democratic or Republican parties and who are not State employees or registered lobbyists, among other requirements. We have contacted and interviewed numerous prospective candidates statewide, and checked community references in order to come up with a list of eminently qualified individuals worthy of consideration by the IRC.

Our search has been comprehensive and has included candidates from across the Empire State and various professional fields and industries. While there may be additional qualified candidates whom we did not uncover despite our best efforts, we know that each of the five individuals listed below are very worthy and deserving of consideration, and the collective support of the Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force. You will find below their names and current titles. We have also attached their resumes to this correspondence for your review and consideration.

I. Jose W. Fernandez, Esq.

Partner

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Phone: 212.351.2376 - Email: JFernandez@gibsondunn.com

II. Dr. Walid Michelin

Senior Vice-President & Chief Medical Officer

NY Archdiocese Health Network

Phone: 914.471.3242 - Email: Wmmd66@gmail.com

III. Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina

Assistant Professor

Fordham University

Phone: 787.396.2174 - Email: cuevasmolina@fordham.edu

IV. Jamell Isidor, Esq.

Deputy Director of the Administrative Enforcement Unit
New York City Department of Buildings
Phone: 917.622.3499 - Email: jamell.isidor@gmail.com

V. Guillermo Chacon

President
Latino Commission on AIDS
Phone: 212.584-9304 - Email: Gchacon@latinoaids.org

Thank you and the members of the Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force for your consideration of and advocacy for these candidates. It is paramount that we ensure that Latinos are represented fairly on the IRC. Please let us know how our organizations can best support your efforts to ensure Latino representation on the commission.

Respectfully,

Jose Perez

Deputy General Counsel
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Phone: 212.219.3360, x7575 - Email: jperez@latinojustice.org

Juan Rosa

Northeast Director of Civic Engagement
NALEO Educational Fund
Phone: 646.305.7116 - Email: jrosa@naleo.org

Eddie Cuesta

National Executive Director
Dominicanos USA
Phone: 646.879.5770 - Email: ecuesta@dominicanosusa.org

CC:

Temporary President and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Speaker of New York State Assembly Carl E. Heastie
New York State Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay
Minority Leader of the New York State Senate John J. Flanagan