

October 11, 2022

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel,

Thank you for your diligent work in addressing inequities since your appointment – your work in moving the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to create a task force to prevent digital discrimination displays your commitment to the cause and promotes equitable access to broadband throughout the United States.¹

As you know, over the past two years, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has been researching the underrepresentation of Latinos in the American media and entertainment workforce. In 2020, I requested that the GAO look into the exclusion of Latinos in the media and entertainment industry. The media and entertainment industry is the narrative-creating and imagine-defining institution in the United States. As such, it plays a vital role in communicating stories of past and present to the American public.

In 2021, the GAO's first report found that despite making up nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population and 18 percent of the workforce, Latinos only make up just 12 percent of workers in the media and entertainment industry. Without Latino voices to tell Latino stories, the void in our narrative becomes filled with harmful stereotypes about Latinos that are dangerous for our community and for the country as a whole. For example, "[o]ver half of American adults believe it is either completely true or somewhat true that the United States is experiencing an invasion at the southern border."³

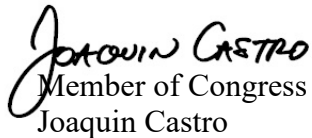
Last week, the GAO released their second report, which 1) details trends in Latino representation in the media and entertainment workforce over the past decade, 2) reviews best practices for diversity and inclusion adopted by the top 25 media companies, and 3) examines the federal government's role in antidiscrimination enforcement. Specifically, the GAO recommended that the FCC enter into another memorandum of understanding with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that requires the EEOC to routinely share information on discrimination charges filed against broadcasters and cable and satellite television operations with the FCC.

¹ <https://www.fcc.gov/task-force-prevent-digital-discrimination>

In the report, the FCC commented and agreed that receiving relevant data from the EEOC would provide the FCC assistance in applying EEO requirements in the preparation of relevant industry reports. However, the FCC's comments lacked a thorough plan for implementing a new memorandum of understanding with the EEOC. As such, I respectfully ask that the FCC detail a plan about how the FCC will enter a new memorandum of understanding with the EEOC about routinely sharing data on discrimination charges against broadcasters and satellite television operators, or how the FCC will routinely work with the EEOC to ensure that media companies that are licensed by the FCC for licensing have lawful employment practices.

FCC is in a unique position to help combat discrimination and racism in the media and entertainment workforce. We anticipate your response within 30 days, and we thank you for your attention and prompt response. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Celeste Acevedo at Celeste.Acevedo@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,


Member of Congress
Joaquin Castro