



Testimony of  
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Before the Committee on Financial Services  
Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion  
U.S. House of Representatives

“Promoting Inclusion: Examining the Diversity Practices of America’s Workforce”

October 17, 2019

Dear Chairwoman Waters, Ranking Member McHenry, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony. And thank you and your staff for your dedication to building a more inclusive workforce and society. I serve as an advocate for access & equity, personally fulfilling my mission to close the education and career gaps that I have faced, and that many of our black and brown communities face. I serve as the President & CEO of the [Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement \(HACE\)](#), a national nonprofit dedicated to the employment, development and advancement of current and aspiring Latino professionals. Our mission is to positively impact the American workplace by cultivating the pipeline of Latino talent and providing professionals the insight, access, and support to be successful in their careers.

Since 1982 and with a network of over 64,000 members across the country, HACE works with employers to remain competitive in an increasingly dynamic economy by helping them attract, develop and retain Latino and other diverse professionals. We carry out our mission via three core areas:

- 1) Talent Acquisition – Programs, services, and events that lead the connection between Latino talent and employers.



- 2) Pipeline & Leadership Development – Programs that cultivate, build and develop the pipeline of Latino talent from the high school level to the C-Suite.
- 3) Thought Leadership & Branding – Events and roundtable discussions on diversity & inclusion best practices, and professional and employer success stories and impact.

The Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement (HACE)'s vision is to see a world where Latinos reach their full potential for themselves and our communities feels a bit closer to reality when I witness our year-round programs and events, yet we are disproportionately underrepresented in highly compensated professional and leadership roles across corporate America and other sectors. We are part of the youngest and the fastest growing population group in the United States, and with an older and more diverse workforce, Latinos access to education, meaningful jobs, and advancement is critical for the economic progress of our country.

## STATISTICS SHOW THE IMPACT OF LATINOS ON THE ECONOMY TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

According to the Pew Research Center:

- *U.S. Latinos are the current and future workforce* - In 2018, Latinos made up 29 million workers in the U.S. By 2020, U.S. Latinos will make up 74% of the growth in new workers.
- *U.S. Latinos are creating jobs* - Within the last decade, 86% of all new businesses in the U.S. have been launched by U.S. Latinos, with Latinas creating business six times faster than any other group.
- *U.S. Latinos are educated* - More students are completing high school and college than ever before. High school drop-out rates decreased from 34% in 1996 to 10% in 2016, and college enrollment increased from 35% to 47% in this same timeframe.

## EMPLOYERS MUST FOCUS ON THE PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF DIVERSE TALENT

Employers must focus on the promotion and retention of diverse talent in order to build a more inclusive workforce. At a former employer, I was told that I was not promoted to a position because of my qualifications, but because the selection committee felt “more comfortable” with the other candidate. That other candidate was an older white male. The selection committee was also all white. While this case was blatant, this is not uncommon where biases against race, gender, or age hinder someone’s opportunity for career progression. My top three of many recommendations of many are:

1. **Require Bias & Diversity Training** – Formal training can help identify conscious and unconscious biases and reduce the negative effects in the workplace. HACE provides access to these trainings.
2. **Require a Diverse Slate of Candidate for Top Level Positions** – Diverse leadership teams boost innovation and profits. According to the Boston Consulting Group, diverse leadership teams account for 45% innovation revenue versus 26% with below-average diversity scores, and 45% market share growth. Engaging and intentionally partnering with organizations like HACE grants employers with access to diverse talent.
3. **Support Employee Participation in Affinity Groups & Leadership Programming** – Programs like HACE’s women’s leadership program, [Mujeres de HACE](#), which empowers Latina professionals to succeed professionally and thrive personally, are key to moving the needle. The program is a cohort model, a safe-space, of 24 hours of culturally-relevant training, coaching, leadership assessments; engagement of successful Latina role models, mentors, and trainers; that have effectively catapulted the careers of our alumnae: 40% promotion within less than 6 months of completing the program, an additional 30% within less than 12 months, and a 40% increase of salary within less than 6 months.

In order to build a more inclusive and diverse workforce, today’s employers must fully support and intentionally invest in these and several key practices over the long-term.