

# National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

July 6, 2023

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Room 423  
100 Constitution Ave NE  
Washington, DC 20510-6225

The Honorable James Risch  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Room 423  
100 Constitution Ave NE  
Washington, DC 20510-6225

### **Re: Support for Ms. Nathalie Rayes, nominee for Ambassador to Croatia**

Dear Senators Menendez and Risch:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) we write to urge the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Senate as a whole, to vote to confirm Ms. Nathalie Rayes to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia.

NHLA is the premier coalition of more than 40 leading national Hispanic civil rights and public policy organizations. Collectively, NHLA leads the advocacy behind the pressing civil rights and policy issues affecting the 62 million U.S. Latinos, including improving the representation of Hispanics in political appointments. NHLA strives to increase Latino visibility and leverages our country's diversity to build a stronger Latino influence in our national affairs.

**Nathalie Rayes is a good fit for Croatia.** One of the largest Croatian diasporas in the United States has flourished since the late 1800's in the San Pedro neighborhood of Los Angeles, a city where Nathalie served as Deputy Chief of Staff to then-Mayor James K. Hahn, managing intergovernmental relations, international trade, and protocol, thus becoming very familiar with the Croatian community. Los Angeles is also the heart of our film industry and, as more American productions film in Croatia's unique historic locales, Nathalie's intrinsic familiarity with Hollywood's needs will help her champion those American businesses to improve their commercial opportunities in Croatia.

As a native of Venezuela who lived there till the age of nine, Nathalie understands the importance of real democracy and the need to help Croatians repel authoritarian influences. Because she's a Latina immigrant, Nathalie's appointment will also help highlight America's true diversity and opportunity in a country where views about the United States were historically skewed by propaganda and still tend to be colored by narrow media portrayals, even in good faith. Nathalie's story is the intrinsically American story that Croatians and the neighboring Balkans need to see as their region and Europe are, once again, embroiled in turmoil related to migration and xenophobia.

Alianza Americas  
American G.I. Forum  
ASPIRA Association  
AVANCE Inc.  
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute  
Farmworker Justice  
Green Latinos  
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities  
Hispanic Federation  
Hispanic National Bar Association  
Hispanics in Philanthropy  
Inter-University Program for Latino Research  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
Mi Familia Vota  
NALEO Education Fund  
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives  
National Association of Latino Arts and Culture  
National Association of Latino Independent Producers  
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.  
National Day Laborer Organizing Network  
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
National Hispanic Council on Aging  
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National Latinx Psychological Association  
Presente.org  
SER Jobs for Progress National  
Southwest Voter Registration Education Project  
U.S.- Mexico Foundation UnidosUS  
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute  
United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce  
Voto Latino

Nathalie has a long-standing interest in foreign relations, including a master's in public policy in the field. She currently serves on the Board of the United States Institute of Peace and served on the Board of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars from 2014-2020. In 2016, trying to address the lack of Latinas in international relations, she created and currently chairs a unique US-Mexico bipartisan effort, the Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) Binational Fellowship to annually prepare 20 Latina professionals and executives from both countries to lead in addressing their country's most critical issues with a global perspective. In 1998, she was a fellow in the Economic Political Section at the U.S. Embassy in Egypt.

The NHLA member organizations, with one voice, urge you to vote in favor of confirming Ms. Nathalie Rayes to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia.

Sincerely,



Kenneth Romero-Cruz  
Executive Director, NHCSL  
Co-Chair, NHLA Government Accountability  
Committee  
NHLA Chair



Al Gallegos  
President, NAHFE  
Co-Chair, NHLA Government Accountability  
Committee

c/ Hon. Charles Schumer  
Hon. Mitch McConnell