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National Hispanic Heritage Month: Fact Sheet

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Introduction

This fact sheet is designed to assist congressional offices with work related to National Hispanic Heritage Month, which is observed from September 15 to October 15. It contains links to census and demographic information, a CRS report, sample speeches and remarks from the *Congressional Record*, and presidential proclamations. It also contains links to additional cultural and historical resources and selected educational, cultural, and advocacy organizations.

History

National Hispanic Heritage Month started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson, and it was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988.

Legislation

P.L. 90-498. Authorized and requested the President to proclaim annually the week including September 15 and 16 as National Hispanic Heritage Week (82 Stat. 848; September 17, 1968).

P.L. 100-402. Amended P.L. 90-498 to provide for the designation of National Hispanic Heritage Month (102 Stat. 1012; August 17, 1988).

P.L. 105-225, §126. Requested that the President issue a yearly proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month (112 Stat. 1259; August 12, 1998).

In recent years, the Senate has passed resolutions recognizing National Hispanic Heritage Month:

- S.Res. 352, September 26, 2019,
- S.Res. 655, September 26, 2018,
- S.Res. 256, September 14, 2017, and
- S.Res. 574, September 26, 2016.

Hispanic Members of Congress

CRS Report R46705, *Membership of the 117th Congress: A Profile*, by Jennifer E. Manning. The report provides a demographic profile of current Members of Congress, including the number of Hispanic and Latino Members, by gender and party.

U.S. House of Representatives, *Hispanic Americans in Congress*. From the Office of the Historian and the Clerk of the House's Office of Art and Archives, this website, based on the book *Hispanic Americans in Congress, 1822–2012*, contains profiles of former and current Hispanic Members of Congress, essays, images, and photos.

Sample Speeches and Recognitions

Members of Congress often make floor statements, issue press releases, or enter Extensions of Remarks into the *Congressional Record* to recognize federal holidays and observances. The following are some recent examples of such statements.

Senator Richard Durbin, “Hispanic Heritage Month,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 166, no. 173 (October 5, 2020), p. S6035

Representative Lucy McBath, “Congressional Commendation Honoring Hispanic Heritage Month,” Extensions of Remarks, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 166, no. 172 (October 2, 2020), pp. E922-E923

Representative Dan Newhouse, “Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month,” remarks in the House, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 166, no. 171 (October 1, 2020), p. H5438

Senator John Cornyn, “Hispanic Heritage Month,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 166, no. 166 (September 24, 2020), pp. S5848-S5849

Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, “Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month,” Extensions of Remarks, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 166, no. 161 (September 17, 2020), p. E857

Senator Benjamin Cardin, “National Hispanic Heritage Month,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 165, no. 162 (October 15, 2019), pp. S5785-S5786

Representative Ross Spano, “Recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month,” remarks in the House, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 165, no. 162 (October 15, 2019), p. H8140

Presidential Proclamations

One of the many uses of a presidential proclamation is to ceremoniously honor a group or call attention to certain issues or events. Some recent proclamations commemorating Hispanic Heritage Month from the *Compilation of Presidential Documents* include the following:

- Presidential Proclamations—Donald Trump (2017-2020)
- Presidential Proclamations—Barack Obama (2009-2016)
- Presidential Proclamations—George W. Bush (2001-2008)
- Presidential Proclamations—Bill Clinton (1993-2000)

Presidential proclamations and remarks from 1993 to the present are available through the govinfo service on the Government Publishing Office website. Earlier remarks are available through The American Presidency Project, established by the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Statistics

Many federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) maintain statistics on Hispanics, including the following:

U.S. Census Bureau, *Facts for Features, Hispanic Heritage Month 2020*. Quick statistics on population, states and counties, businesses, families and children, language, income, poverty, health insurance, education, jobs, voting, and national service.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, *Profile: Hispanic/Latino Americans*. Broad profiles on language, education, income and employment, insurance coverage, and health.

Pew Research Center, *Facts on U.S. Latinos*. Interactive statistical profiles of the Latino population in the 50 states and the District of Columbia based on Pew Research Center tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010, 2015 and 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 2000 U.S. decennial census.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Health of Hispanic or Latino Population*. Information and statistics on health issues from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics.

Educational, Cultural, and Advocacy Organizations

Many other resources provide information on the history and culture of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI). Internships, fellowships, scholarships, and educational publications and resources.

Smithsonian Latino Center. Exhibitions, research, collections, and educational programs promoting Latino heritage and culture in the United States.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). An advocacy group that “advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs.”

UNIDOS US. Formerly NCLR, UNIDOS US is a national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization that provides a Latino perspective in seven key areas: assets and investments, civil rights and criminal justice, education, employment and economic status, health, immigration, voting, and youth.

Historical and Cultural Resources

Numerous government resources provide information on the history and culture of Hispanic Heritage Month. Some of these include the following:

Library of Congress, “Library of Congress Resources for Hispanic Heritage Month.” Describes some of the resources the Library of Congress holds that are relevant to Hispanic Heritage Month, including music from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement.

Library of Congress, Hispanic Reading Room. Serves as the primary access point for research relating to parts of the world encompassing the geographical areas of the Caribbean, Latin America, and Iberia; the indigenous cultures of those areas; and peoples throughout the world historically influenced by Luso-Hispanic heritage, including Latinos in the United States and people of Portuguese or Spanish heritage in Africa, Asia, and Oceania.

National Hispanic Heritage Month. Provides images, collections, and audio and video on topics such as Spanish missions, Hispanic veterans, history, and art. This is a collaborative project of the Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

National Park Service, “National Register of Historic Places Program: National Hispanic Heritage Month.” Highlights several locations that exemplify Hispanic culture and achievement, including the Lamesa Farm Workers Community Historic District in western Texas.

Smithsonian Insider, “Latino Experience is in Focus at African American History and Culture Museum.” An interview with Ariana Curtis, the curator of Latino studies at the Smithsonian African American History and Culture Museum. It includes an introduction to the term Afro-Latino.

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This fact sheet was originally authored by Molly Higgins, former Reference and Data Services Librarian .

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