

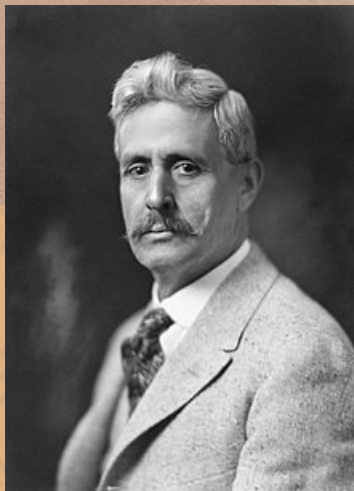


Justice Sonia Sotomayor

National Hispanic Heritage Month

*A Civics in Real Life Series
Honoring Hispanic American
Representation Across America*

Spotlight 1: The Branches



Octaviano Ambrosio Larrazolo Corral

National Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States. This spotlight focuses on their achievements within the three branches of our national government. Let's learn more about the representation in each branch below.



Representation in the Legislative Branch

- Since 1899, at least one Hispanic American has served in Congress each year.
- First Senator: Octaviano Ambrosio Larrazolo Corral (R-NM) (1928-1929)
- First Representative: Joseph Marion Hernandez (Whig-FL Territory) (1822-1823)
- First Female Senator: Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) (2016)
- First Female Representative: Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) (1989)
- Current number as of 2024: House- 56 Latino/Hispanic Members; Senate- 6 Latino/Hispanic Members; making up 9.6% of total congressional membership



Representation in the Executive Branch

- First Cabinet member: Lauro Fred Cavazos Jr. (D-TX), Secretary of Education for Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush (1988-1990)
- President Obama appointed most Latino/Hispanic Americans to Cabinet positions (5)
- Alberto Gonzales (TX), the highest-ranking Hispanic to lead the Federal Executive Department as Attorney General (2005) under President George W. Bush
- Ben Fernandez (R-CA), the first Latino/Hispanic major-party presidential contender (1980)



Representation in the Judicial Branch

- The First and only Latino/Hispanic American to be represented in the U.S. Supreme Court is Justice Sonia Sotomayor. She was appointed in 2009 and is still serving as of 2024.

Civics Challenge: Search & Learn

Pick one of the individuals listed above to learn more about. Research and craft a small biography on their contributions to the U.S. government.