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Latinos Make Some Gains in Representation in Los Angeles Times Opinion Pages

UCLA study shows while there is still severe underrepresentation, efforts to include more Latino voices are showing results

In a [new study](#) analyzing Latino representation in the Los Angeles Times opinion section, the [UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute](#) (UCLA LPPI) finds that the Times has made progress in increasing representation in the paper's opinion and editorial section over the past two years. Despite this progress, the report's findings suggest that Latinos and their narratives, lived experiences and policy needs remain largely invisible in both authorship of opinion pieces and the editorial content of the Los Angeles Times.

The new study from UCLA tracks strong gains for Latinos on the paper's editorial board, where representation increased from 11% to 37% year over year. This was the largest growth in Latino representation on an editorial board across the five papers the report analyzed, which included the New York Times, Washington Post, Miami Herald, and Dallas Morning News.

Latino representation in op-ed authorship also increased from 4% in 2021 to 10% in 2022. Still, the number of Latino-authored op-eds would need to increase fivefold to achieve true proportional representation of the Latino population in Los Angeles County.

"The LA Times has made notable progress in increasing Latino representation in the op-ed section, but more work is necessary to ensure the paper of record meaningfully represents Latino communities," said Sonja Diaz, founding director of UCLA LPPI. "Without full Latino inclusion, leaders and readers lack accurate narratives and nuanced perspectives to fully understand how decisions on issues ranging from environmental justice to artificial intelligence impact the nation's youthful, Latino communities."

Despite these gains, Latina authors continue to be particularly underrepresented in the opinion pages of the Los Angeles Times. Only six percent of op-eds in 2022 were authored by a Latina, up from 1% in 2021.

To evaluate the representation of Latino voices, researchers examined 432 op-eds written by 269 unique authors from 120 randomly selected dates in 2022. The study also utilized data from the LA Times on the race/ethnicity of its editorial board members.

After the [previous report](#), UCLA LPPI formed an ad hoc group of multi-generational, cross-sector Latino leaders to help accelerate Latino representation across the newsroom, with a specific focus on increased representation in its opinion and editorial sections. Meeting with LA Times leadership, reporters and other staff, the ad hoc group shared emerging stories relevant to the Latino community and provided expert perspectives on a range of issues, from Latino representation in media to the preferences of Latino voters. As an information-sharing channel between Latino community leaders and the LA Times, the ad hoc group has created a powerful forum for accountability, leading to the hiring of more Latinx writers on the editorial board.

Despite this, nearly 90% of all op-eds in 2022 had no Latina/o/x authors, and over 88% did not include any content that unambiguously discussed Latino communities. The report recommends strengthening the commitment to increasing Latino representation by expanding the editorial board and using hiring and retention practices to ensure strategic decisions about the Opinion section include the perspectives of Latinos and other communities of color. The report also calls on the LA Times to create a strategic plan to increase Latino representation that includes transparent data collection. Additional recommendations include creating a tailored outreach program to diversify the submissions pool and working with the state's higher education system to develop training programs and fellowships to encourage the submission of opinion pieces by a new generation of young leaders.

“Our work to hold the LA Times accountable is focused on the state's future with its growing diversity,” said Rodrigo Domínguez-Villegas. “By creating programs that train the next generation of young leaders from communities of color, this work will create an environment where all voices are heard in the corridors of power.”

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ABOUT UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INSTITUTE

The UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute addresses the most critical domestic policy challenges facing Latinos and other communities of color through research, advocacy, mobilization, and leadership development to expand genuine opportunity for all Americans.