

HISPANIC VETERANS
LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

January 28, 2021

Mr. John Roth
Acting Secretary of the Air Force
General Charles Q. Brown Jr.
Air Force Chief of Staff
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Roth and General Brown:

The Hispanic Veterans Leadership Alliance (HVLA) recently reviewed the Air Force's Independent Racial Disparity Review (IRDR) published in December 2020, which focused on disparities affecting Black/African American members of the force and provided recommendations to develop systemic action plans for each.¹ The IRDR study presented a significant amount of data that showed racial disparities for Black/African American service members in apprehensions, criminal investigations, military justice, administrative separations, placement into occupational career fields, certain promotion rates, professional military educational development, and leadership opportunities. Because the focus of the report was on one demographic, the report did not include complete data on Hispanics. Yet, the limited Hispanic data that the IRDR did include clearly shows disparities for Hispanics that are as great or even greater than those affecting Black/African Americans. Consequently, the HVLA believes that while the IRDR is a good first step towards addressing racial and ethnic disparities in the Air Force, it is incomplete and the recommendations contained therein are premature.

Based on our collective and personal experience as former senior leaders and minority officers, we suggest that the Air Force immediately commission another IRDR-type review focusing on the largest minority group in the U.S. Air Force, the Hispanic members of the force.

As the focus of the IRDR was on Black/African Americans, the information provided in the report includes data on Hispanics for only a few categories such as promotion rates and selections for command positions. While the IRDR correctly identifies significant issues facing Black/African-Americans with respect to these two categories of data, the data presented clearly show similar disparities facing Hispanics, but these are not meaningfully discussed or addressed.

¹ "Independent Racial Disparity Review," December 2020, Online:
<https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/ig/IRDR.pdf>

For example, IRDR data clearly show underrepresentation of Hispanics in command level positions, in particular, the low selection rate of Hispanic officers to Squadron Commander and Wing Commander slots. As acknowledged in the report, these types of assignments are necessary for future advancement in rank. As shown by the data in the report Hispanic service members are consequently *underrepresented* in promotions to Major through Colonel, *severely underrepresented* in promotions to Brigadier General and Major General, and have *zero promotions* to the ranks of Lieutenant General and General. The attached HVLA review of the IRDR presents a summary of the Hispanic issues that merit more detailed review and analysis.

HVLA looks forward to discussing this matter further and eagerly awaits your response.

Sincerely:



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Former Director J7, U.S. Southern Command
Director of Air Force Affairs, HVLA



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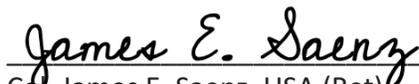
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cc: Lt. Gen. Sami D. Said
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