

NHMC & NLMC IS VICTORIOUS IN ITS EFFORTS TO PRESS PARAMOUNT PICTURES TO COMMIT TO LONG-TERM DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN ITS WORKFORCE

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Hollywood, CA - After two well-reported and well-attended demonstrations and an ongoing social media campaign against Paramount Pictures in 2018 for having the worst record amongst the six major film studios in hiring Latinos in its workforce, the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC) and the National Latino Media Council (NLMC) are declaring a historic victory in paving the way for achieving equality for Latino creatives and other people of color in Hollywood.

On February 20, 2019, Paramount's Chairman and CEO, Jim Gianopulos, announced the studio would boost its efforts to promote diversity and inclusion across storylines, vendors, shooting locations and crew. This new diversity initiative includes not just film, but also television and animated projects. In a company-wide memo, Gianopulos wrote "as part of the development and green light process, our productions will be required to complete a plan designed to enhance access and opportunities for groups historically underrepresented in the media industry." The memo continues to state that when a project is completed by the studio, the production team will then report their results to a newly formed Content Creation Council, which "will compile and analyze all data to develop metrics, establish benchmarks, and ensure ongoing accountability. As an organization, we hope this is a big step toward progress by showing that we are committed to doing better each and every day." The full memo can be read [here](#).

"It makes good business sense for Gianopulos to diversify Paramount's workforce given the American Latino community is 18% of the U.S. population, has an estimated purchasing power of \$1.5 trillion dollars, and buys 24% of all movie tickets nationwide," said Alex Nogales, president and CEO of the National Hispanic Media Coalition. "The NHMC and NLMC will be closely monitoring the studio's efforts to ensure its diversity and inclusion initiatives are on track. If Paramount executives do not accomplish what they have pledged to do, we will have no choice but to double our efforts in the campaign to once again boycott the studio."

"Latinos have long encountered the widest gap between representation in the national population and representation in front of and behind the camera in movies and other entertainment media," said Thomas A. Saenz, NLMC chair and MALDEF president and general counsel. "That must change for our nation to thrive, and we will continue to monitor progress and to demand continuous and significant improvement from Paramount and all other studios."

The NHMC took action against Paramount in the latter part of 2018 after conducting extensive research that revealed Latino writers, producers, directors and actors were nearly invisible across the board at Paramount. Some of the important findings were:

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On May 2, 2018, Nogales sent a letter to Gianopulos requesting a meeting to discuss Paramount's near exclusion of Latinos at Paramount. Instead, on June 25, 2018, members of the NHMC and the NLMC met with Paramount COO Andrew Gumpert to encourage the company to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU), an agreement promising the studio would increase the hiring of Latinos in front and in back of camera. Three weeks later on July 17, 2018, Gumpert spoke to Nogales and stated that Paramount would not sign a MOU.

At a press conference on July 31, 2019, the NHMC and NLMC revealed to local and national media Paramount's dismal Latino employment record and the studio's refusal to sign a MOU.

As a direct response to Paramount's failure to implement a plan to diversify, and recent evidence conducted and analyzed by UCLA's Hollywood Diversity Report , as well as a Latino Decisions' poll , which found that Latinos are willing to take action against studios who fail at inclusion, the NHMC and NLMC began a series of demonstrations against Paramount Pictures in the fall of 2018.

The first occurred on August 25, 2018 when protesters began to urge the general public to boycott Paramount's upcoming films, using the hashtag #NoLatinosNoTickets. (To view pictures of this protest, [click here](#)). This demonstration followed a similar March 3, 2018 #OscarsSoWhite protest in Hollywood near the location of the Academy Awards, in which NHMC's goal was to bring awareness to an industry that has historically excluded Latino talent in front and behind camera.

The second protest against Paramount took place on October 17, 2018, and this time, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of 45 prominent nonpartisan civil rights and advocacy organizations chaired by MALDEF president and general counsel Thomas A. Saenz, joined in supporting the NHMC/NLMC campaign, writing a strong letter to Gianopulos, which pointed out that major media companies continue to dramatically under-represent the Latino community, and are therefore "complicit in creating a societal atmosphere that permits demonization".

At this second protest, Nogales presented a Paramount representative with 12,000+ petition signatures collected from the Color of Change website, which demanded Gianopulos sign a MOU. Hand-drawn cards by Latino children depicting themselves excluded from film were included.

Nearly six weeks later, when Nogales did not hear from Gianopulos, the NHMC sent a letter to Robert Bakish, the president and CEO of Viacom, Paramount's parent company, requesting a meeting to discuss signing a MOU, which would outline how Paramount will diversify its workforce. Three days later, Bakish emailed Nogales stating that diversity and inclusion "are of tremendous importance" at Viacom and all of its brands, and his new leadership team at Paramount is "actively taking steps to increase diverse representation in both our employee population and in our content creation."

Nearly three months later, and two days before the NHMC's 22nd Annual Impact Awards Gala on

February 22, 2019, Gianopulos announced the creation of Paramount's new diversity initiative.

The NHMC's and NLMC's ongoing campaign against Paramount Pictures was a critical factor in the studio's decision to finally diversify its workplace since Paramount was founded over 105 years ago.

For media inquiries contact Alison Sotomayor, director of communications, at communications@nhmc.org.

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