



February 23, 2021

Hon. Mike Doyle
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
270 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Robert E. Latta
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
2467 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Doyle, Ranking Member Latta, and the Members of the House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology,

My name is Brenda Victoria Castillo, and I have the honor of serving as President and CEO of the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC). NHMC is a 35 year old civil rights organization founded to combat hate targeting the Latinx community in the media. I strongly believe that the ways in which Latinx are portrayed, characterized, and reported on have a direct effect on the ways in which we are treated in this world. Hate in the media—all forms of media—leads to hate in real life.

In 2018, four in ten Latinx experienced discrimination in the last year, such as being criticized for speaking Spanish or being told to go back to their home country.¹ Hate crimes targeting Latinx are at an all time high, and have been steadily increasing since 2016.² While dehumanization and discrimination against Latinx has starkly risen in recent years due to the influence of Donald

¹ Mark Hugo Lopez, et. al, “More Latinos Have Serious Concerns About Their Place in America Under Trump”, *Latinos and Discrimination*, Pew Research Center (rel. Oct. 25, 2018), <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2018/10/25/latinos-and-discrimination/>.

² 2019 Hate Crime Statistics Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/topic-pages/incidents-and-offenses>.



Trump, hate and violence targeting the Latinx community is not a new phenomenon in this country.

For centuries Latinx have been murdered at the hands of white supremacy. In 1857, 40 Mexican American Ox Cart drivers were murdered by racist white Texans.³ In 1877, a mob of 100 white men captured five Mexican men in Bakersfield, California, held a mock trial, and hung them.⁴ In 1915, Texas Rangers slaughtered dozens of Latinx in what is known as *La Matanza*.⁵ In 1931, nearly 1.8 million people were targets of a campaign to force relocation of Latinx, marked by the Raid at La Placita.⁶ The list of these historical events of violence, which are largely unknown and *not* included in history curriculums, go on and on.

Most recently, a white supremacist drove across the state of Texas, from Dallas to El Paso, to open fire in a Walmart, hoping to kill “as many Mexicans as possible”⁷ to stop the “invasion”.⁸ Where did this motivation to mass murder come from? We know that Donald Trump took out over 2,000 ads calling for the end of the “invasion” on Facebook.⁹ However, we *also* now know that in 2019 alone, Fox News made over 70 on-air references to an invasion of migrants, aired at least 55 clips of Trump calling the surge of migrants an invasion, made 24 references to an invasion on Fox & Friends, Fox & Friends First, and Fox & Friends Weekend, combined, and allowed four Republican Members of Congress to spew invasion rhetoric on their new platform.¹⁰ In El Paso on August 3, 2019, white supremacy, armed with radicalization by the

³ Texas Cart War, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas_Cart_War.

⁴ William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, “The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928”, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Winter, 2003), pp. 411-438, https://www.sjsu.edu/people/ruma.chopra/courses/H170_MW9am_S12/s1/B2_Lynching_Mexicans.pdf.

⁵ Matanza of 1915, Refusing to Forget, <https://refusingtoforget.org/historical-markers/matanza-of-1915/>.

⁶ Feb. 26, 1931: La Placita Raid, Zinn Education Project, <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/la-placita-raid/>.

⁷ [Dani Anguiano](#), “It's worse than ever': how Latinos are changing their lives in Trump's America”, *The Guardian*, Oct. 7, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/oct/06/latinos-trump-hate-crimes-el-paso>.

⁸ David K. Li, “I'm the shooter': Accused El Paso gunman told police he was targeting Mexicans”, *NBC News*, Aug. 9, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/i-m-shooter-accused-el-paso-gunman-told-police-he-n1040901>.

⁹ Julia Carrie Wong, Trump referred to immigrant 'invasion' in 2,000 Facebook ads, analysis reveals, *The Guardian*, Aug. 5, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/05/trump-internet-facebook-ads-racism-immigrant-invasion>.

¹⁰ Lis Power, Fox News' “invasion” rhetoric by the numbers, *Media Matters*, Aug. 6, 2019, <https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-news/fox-news-invasion-rhetoric-numbers>.



far-right media, massacred 23 people, injured dozens more, and scarred an entire community with hate.

Fox News is not the sole keeper of this issue, but it is perhaps the most far-reaching. With constant dehumanization, discriminatory, and racist rhetoric in their programming, it is massively upsetting that Fox News has retained its five year long position as the most watched basic cable network, and had its highest ratings ever in 2020.¹¹ Other “news” networks like Newsmax, One America News Network (OANN), and networks owned by known far-right messenger, the Sinclair Broadcasting Group, are on the rise as they join in on anti-Latinx and anti-immigrant programming.

It is unnerving that a broadcaster might be fined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for airing the F-word on primetime, but face little to no consequences when airing hate and extremism that enables white supremacy, spreads false information, helps incite an insurrection, and ultimately takes lives. Media is one of the most powerful institutions of influence in this country, and until the media is held accountable for the role it plays in the dissemination of hate and violence, equity and justice will remain out of reach for the Latinx community.

Yours in the Movement,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Victoria Castillo', written in a cursive style.

Brenda Victoria Castillo
President & CEO
National Hispanic Media Coalition

¹¹ Tommy Beer, “Fox News Viewership Plummetts: First Time Behind CNN And MSNBC In Two Decades”, Forbes, Jan. 16, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tommybeer/2021/01/16/fox-news-viewership-plummetts-first-time-behind-cnn-and-msbc-in-two-decades/?sh=242aa7f53422>.