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**HISPANIC NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION RELEASES LANDMARK  
REPORT FROM *THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF LATINAS IN THE  
LEGAL PROFESSION***

*U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder joins the HNBA and the Commission for the release of their report at a luncheon honoring Associate Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – In coordination with the Hispanic National Bar Association’s 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, the **HNBA's Commission on the Status of Latinas in the Legal Profession** released a ground breaking study that provides both qualitative and quantitative data on the status and experiences of Latinas in the legal profession, on a national level and across all major legal sectors. The report, ***Few and Far Between: The Reality of Latina Lawyers***, was released during the Commission’s First Annual Awards Luncheon featuring Attorney General Eric Holder and honoring Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

Authored by Jill L. Cruz and Melinda S. Molina, the study addresses the problem of the under-representation of Latinas in the legal profession relative to their overall representation in the United States population. Latinas currently make up 7% of the total U.S. population and are part of the largest and fastest-growing ethnic minority group in the United States—yet represent only 1.3% of the nation’s lawyers, the lowest representation of any racial or ethnic group as compared to their overall presence in the nation.

“There are only 13,000 Latina lawyers in the United States,” said Dolores Atencio, co-chair of the Commission. “The title of our report, ‘Few and Far Between,’ unfortunately accurately records that these low numbers are part of the reason why Latina attorneys face a ‘triple threat’ to their legal careers.” Ms. Atencio presented the HNBA's report today at the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's public policy conference in Washington, DC.

Román D. Hernández, HNBA National President, stated that “The Commission's report documents empirically what many have long suspected. Hispanic female lawyers experience systemic obstacles to advancement that are attributable to the intersection of their race, ethnicity and gender. Those obstacles are there at all phases of their legal careers from entry, to retention, to advancement. It is the HNBA's hope that by identifying barriers and strategies to overcome them, the study will enable a greater number of Latinas to succeed. I applaud Immediate Past President Ramona Romero's work in establishing the Commission and pledge to support the Commission's work during my term as National President.”

The Commission's Study provides a demographic and professional profile of Latina attorneys nationwide and across all major legal sectors, shedding light on the issues and barriers Latina attorneys face, as well as strategies for overcoming those barriers. The findings suggest that Latinas in this Study are inadequately represented in leadership positions throughout the profession, appear to have a relatively high rate of attrition, and there is some indication that they may earn less than their non-Latina counterparts.

The Study also finds that the under-representation of Latinas in the legal profession is due in part to unique barriers impacting their entry, retention and advancement in the legal profession. Barriers that impede their entry into the profession include the lack of visible attorney role models, institutionalized discouragement, and a significant cultural divide in law school. As ethnically and racially diverse females, Latina attorneys encounter a multilayered glass ceiling that acts as a triple threat to their careers. This can range from overt sexism, lack of influential mentors, and the conflicting demands of career and motherhood. Their qualifications and abilities as attorneys are often questioned and devalued, which works to undermine Latinas' self-confidence in their capabilities as lawyers. Furthermore, as one of the few and only Latinas in their workplaces, their sense of otherness reinforces their isolation and alienation in the legal profession.

Recommendations for increasing the presence and success of Latinas in the legal profession include: providing mentoring opportunities and visible attorney role models to Latinas at all phases of their educational and career development, especially Latina youth, supporting Latina networks and support systems, providing gender neutral and family-friendly workplaces, and fostering continued research and education on Latinas in the legal profession, while continuing to monitor their progress.

*The Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) is an incorporated, not-for-profit, national membership organization that represents the interests of the more than 100,000 Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants, and law students in the United States and its territories. From the days of its founding three decades ago, the HNBA has acted as a force for positive change within the legal profession. For more information, please visit [www.HNBA.com](http://www.HNBA.com).*

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