



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Breaking Barriers: Celebrating the Inauguration of Brooklyn's Historic All-Latino Judicial Bench

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In the midst of Hispanic Heritage Month, we find another reason to celebrate and take pride in our community. I feel deeply honored to recognize the unprecedented formation of the first entirely Latino bench in the Appellate Division, Second Department. The presence of Justices Hector LaSalle, Betsy Barros, Helen Voutsinas, and Lourdes Ventura in such esteemed positions stands as a testament to the hard work, dedication, and unwavering spirit of our community.

Having championed the cause of Latino representation for years, today's historic event fills me with profound joy and hope. It reflects the countless efforts of our community to secure its rightful place across all spheres of society.

The heartfelt words of Justice LaSalle deeply resonate with me. They highlight our collective heritage, rooted in the diverse landscapes of Latin America yet firmly grounded in the ethos of New York. Their stories, as children of the working class and first-generation college graduates, mirror those of countless Latinos, serving as a beacon of hope and inspiration.

Each of these Justices has carved a unique path, full of dedication and resilience. The trailblazing journey of Justice Barros, the impactful leadership of Justice Voutsinas, and the unwavering commitment of Justice Ventura are shining examples for all.

As we celebrate this milestone, Justice LaSalle's reminder of the existing representation gap serves as a call to action. With Latinos making up 20% of our state's population but only 10% of our judiciary, our work is far from over.