

The Status of Latino Men in Law: Are They Too Few and Far Between?

Over the past two decades, in my research and work with Latina attorneys, my primary aim has been to empower them to navigate, enhance, and advance their careers successfully. I have also continuously monitored their status and progress due to their persistent underrepresentation, especially in leadership roles.

This focus naturally led me to consider the situation with Hispanic men: Do they face similar challenges? Are Latino male lawyers and law students significantly underrepresented across the legal profession, and do they encounter similar obstacles in advancing to leadership positions?

While the answer to this question requires further investigation, Hispanic men also appear to be too few and far between as law students, lawyers, and leaders throughout the legal profession. This conclusion is supported by data analyzed from my recent article, "[Still Too Few & Far Between: The Status of Latina Lawyers](#)," published in the Chicax-Latinx Law Review in June 2024. Drawing from that research, I present a snapshot of the current representation of Latino male law students and attorneys (see Chart 1) and offer critical insights about their status and growth.

Chart 1: Representation of Latino Male Law Students and Lawyers

Latino Male Representation	
U.S. Population	9.7%
Law Students	6.1%
Summer Associates	3.9%
Associates	3.3%
All Law Firm Attorneys	2.6%
Partners	2%
Equity Partners	2%
Law School Deans	3.5%
Article III Federal Judges	5.4%
State Supreme Court Judges	~3%
Fortune 1000 GCs	1.5%

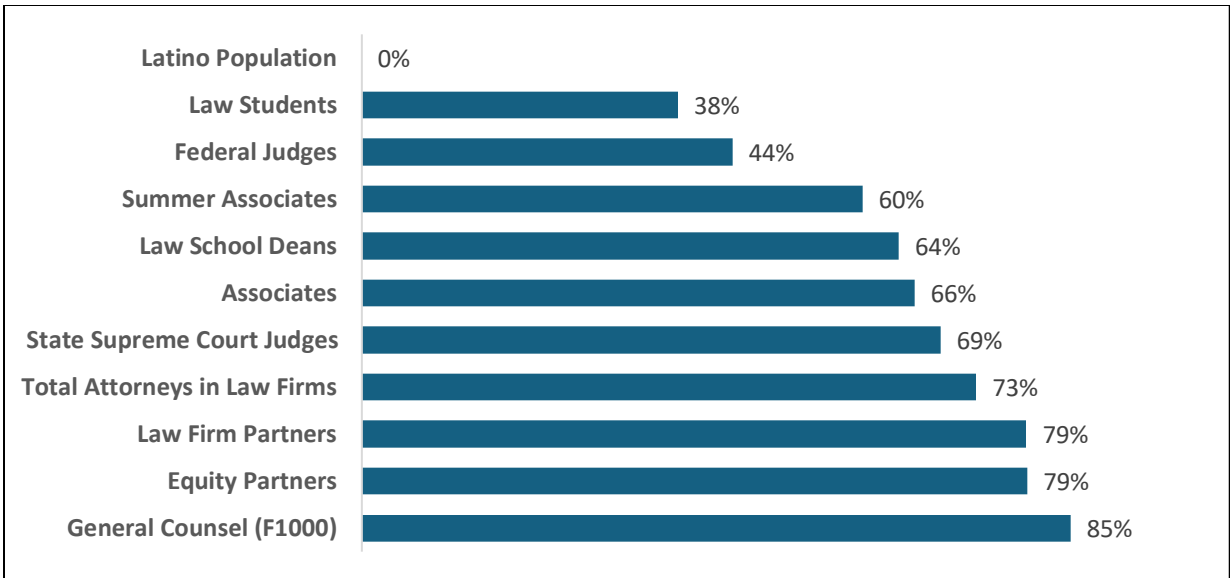
Status of Latino Male Law Students

- ◆ **Latino Male Law Student Enrollment Lags Behind Population Size and Latinas:** Latino male law student enrollment has increased from 4.3% in 2009 to 6.1% in 2023. Despite this growth, their enrollment numbers still lag behind their overall population of 9.7%. Additionally, their growth is less robust compared to Latina law students, whose 2023 enrollment at 9.2% nearly mirrors their U.S. population size of 9.4%.
- ◆ **Lower Admittance in Top-Tier Law Schools:** Like their Latina counterparts, Latino male law students are less likely to be admitted into the highest-ranked law schools. In 2023, only 20% of first-year Latino male law students were enrolled in the top 50 ranked institutions compared to 22% in the bottom 50 schools. None of the ten most popular law schools for Latino men were ranked top-tier, and four of the highest-attended schools for Latino men were in Puerto Rico.
- ◆ **High Bar Exam Passage Rates:** In 2023, 71% of Latino male test takers passed the bar exam on their first attempt. Pass rates increased to 81% on the second and 88% on the third attempt. While this is slightly higher than the first-time pass rates for Latina test takers at 68%, their success rates are nearly matched with successive attempts.

Status of Latino Male Lawyers

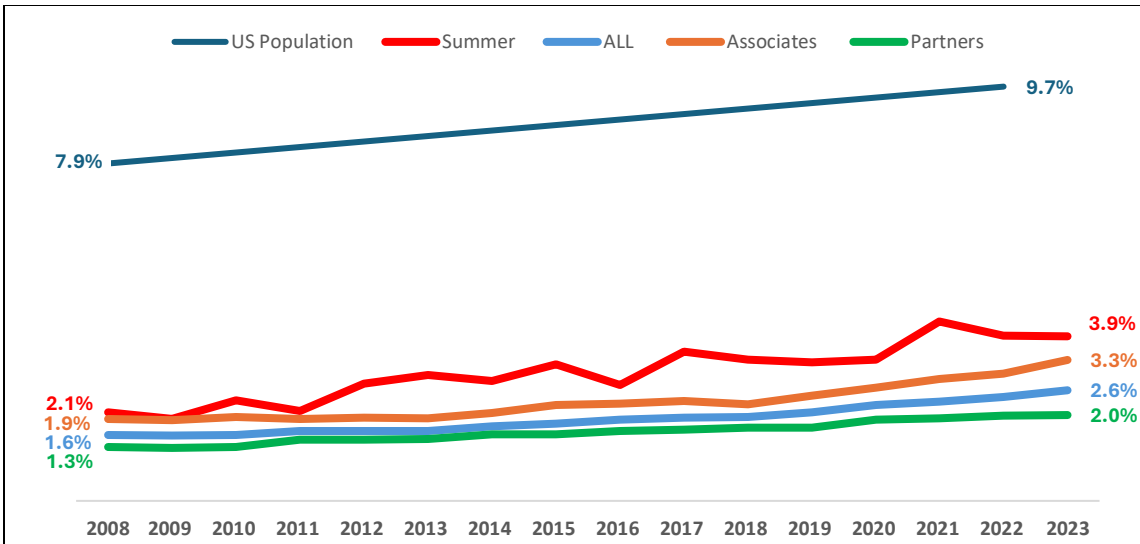
- ◆ **Lack of Latino Male Attorneys in Top Legal Roles:** Despite comprising nearly 10% of the U.S. population, Latino men are significantly underrepresented in top legal roles within law firms, corporate offices, academia, and the judiciary, as reflected in Chart 1. Although they are more likely to be represented in leadership roles than Latina attorneys, their presence still falls below their population proportion. As illustrated in Chart 2, this disparity is especially glaring in law firm partnerships and general counsel positions, whose representation gap is nearly 80% below the expected level.

Chart 2: Latino Male Attorney Representation Gap



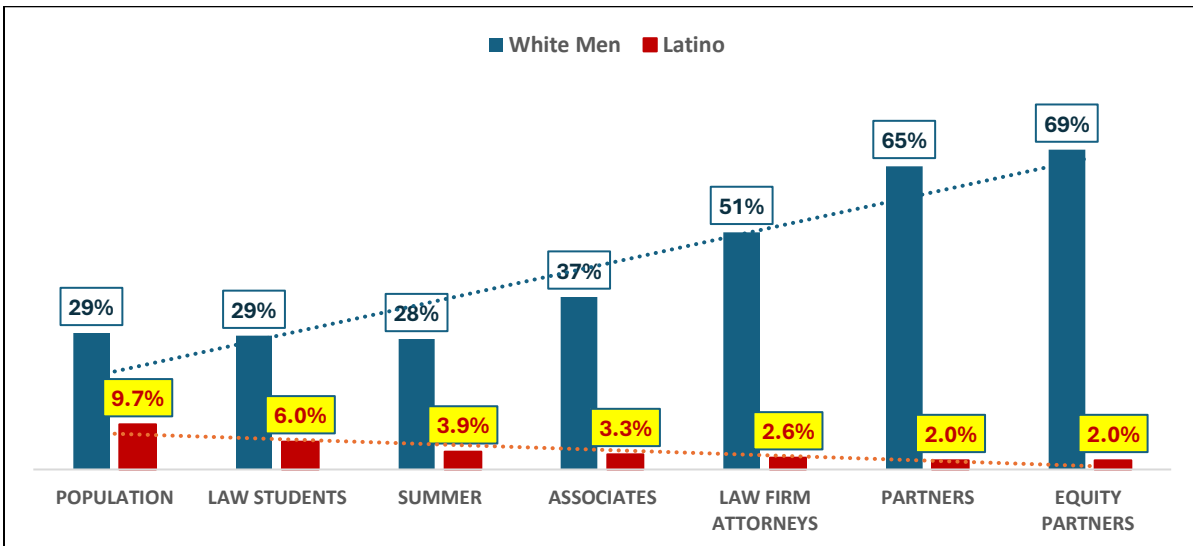
◆ **Stagnant Growth in Law Firms:** In 2023, Latino men made up only 2.6% of all attorneys in law firms, indicating significant underrepresentation at all levels and minimal growth over the past 15 years (see Chart 3). Latino men comprised just 3.9% of summer associates, 3.3% of associates, and only 2% of partners, including equity partners. While Latinas were also underrepresented, accounting for only 2.3% of all law firm attorneys and just 1% of partners, there has been more significant growth in their numbers at the entry-level ranks, such as summer associates and associates.

Chart 3: Latino Male Attorney Growth in Law Firms (2008-2023)



◆ **Widening Advancement Gap:** Like their Latina law firm counterparts, the representation of Latino male attorneys in law firms dwindles even further at higher ranks. Chart 4 illustrates this widening gap between Latino men and white men, particularly among partners. While the ratio of white men to Latino men is 3:1 in the general population, the ratio of white male partners to Latino male partners is nearly 35:1, underscoring the significant and widening disparity at the top levels.

Chart 4: Law Firm Advancement Gap



◆ **Only 15 Latino Male GCs in the Fortune 1000.** Latino men face significant challenges securing high-profile in-house positions, particularly as general counsel in Fortune 1000 companies. As of 2022, there were only 15 Latino male general counsels in these

influential and powerful companies, making them the second most underrepresented attorney group next to Latinas, who held 14 of these roles.

- ◆ **Latino Men Are Better Represented as Federal Judges:** The judiciary shows a promising trend for Latino men. As of July 2024, they held 5.4% of active Article III federal judgeships, the highest reported representation of Latino male attorneys in any legal sector. Additionally, there were 38 Latino male U.S. District Court judges and 8 Latino male U.S. Circuit Court judges, but no Latino male Supreme Court judges. Latino men are slightly better represented than Latinas in the judiciary, who hold 4.5% of these federal judgeships. However, Latino male representation in state supreme courts was around 3% as of 2022.
- ◆ **Only 7 Latino Male Law School Deans:** Out of approximately 200 ABA-accredited law schools, only 7 Latino male law school deans account for just 3.5% of the total. Two of these deans are at law schools located in Puerto Rico. While it is higher than the 4 Latina law school deans leading these schools, it remains below their population percentage and significantly less than the 42% of white male law school deans who dominate these roles.

Conclusion

Latino male lawyers and law students appear to face challenges similar to those of their Latina counterparts in achieving parity in the profession and advancing to leadership roles. Given this realization, it is essential to focus more research and attention on Latino men's career-related challenges. Successful initiatives offered to Latina attorneys—such as early career and leadership development programs, pipeline programs, and other opportunities—should be extended to include Latino men. By expanding these opportunities to serve the broader Hispanic/Latinx law student and lawyer community, they can realize their full power and potential as lawyers and leaders.