

Dr. Megan Springate ([00:00:00](#)):

Greetings, all. Welcome to America250's Community Conversation with members of the Latino, Hispanic, and Chicano communities. With these conversations, we're engaging with communities across the United States and around the world. Panelists and participants have the opportunity to share what the U.S. Semiquincentennial means to them and their communities and their hopes for the America250 commemoration and celebration. I'm Megan Springate. I'm the director of engagement here at America250 and I am one of your co-moderators today. Our other moderator is Dr. Carleen Carey, America250's director of public outreach and inclusion. A little bit of housekeeping before we get going. Oh, by the way, I'm very happy to see everyone saying where they're from in the chat. So welcome y'all, and I see international folks here, which is exciting, and folks from around the country, thank you.

Dr. Megan Springate ([00:01:01](#)):

So again, a little bit of housekeeping. The conversation is being recorded and will be available on the America250 website and YouTube as soon as or soon after we're done rather. Please use the Q&A function or the chat window to ask questions or make comments to the panel and a reminder to all that America250 and these conversations are nonpartisan, so we will be keeping that in mind as we have our conversation. A shout-out to Stephanie, Mari, Kara, and everyone else here at America250 for keeping everything running smoothly behind the scenes, and a special thank you to our ASL interpreters for joining us. There's also a closed caption function. If you would like to turn it on you can do so from the little bar at the bottom of your screen. Before we meet our panelists, I'd like to give a brief overview of what America250 is to help set the stage for our conversation. But first, let me introduce Semiquincentennial Commissioner and 43rd Treasurer of the United States, the honorable Rosie Rios. Welcome, Rosie!

Rosie Rios ([00:02:11](#)):

Thank you, Dr. Springate. I'm Rosie Rios, 43rd Treasurer of the United States. And I'm currently a commissioner for the Semiquincentennial Commission and also an executive committee member. The Latino, Hispanic, and Chicano communities have deeply influenced American history. Today, we'll have an open conversation exploring the experience of these communities in the United States, discuss their rich culture and heritage, and have engaging conversations that will guide America250's mission of being the most inclusive commemoration in our nation's history. Community Conversations will be hosted regularly through 2026, giving people across the country the opportunity to influence America 250's commemoration and celebration, and perhaps even before 250 years. I'm in California, which used to be Mexico. America250 aims to tap into the hopes, dreams, and ideas of all communities in order to honor our past 250 years and shape our next 250, I am honored to welcome our panelists and all of you attending our Community Conversations with the Latino, Hispanic, and Chicano communities. Thank you for your support and for engaging with America250. Now I'll turn the conversation over to our director of engagement, Dr. Megan Springate.

Dr. Megan Springate ([00:03:31](#)):

Thank you, Rosie, as always. It's wonderful to have you join us. So again a brief overview of America250. This is just a very quick snapshot of what our purpose, mission, vision, and values are. I especially would like to draw your attention to our purpose, to catalyze a more perfect union, our values, service, diversity, collaboration, respect, optimism, and imagination, and also to our themes invite involve, imagine, and inspire. And everything we do is shaped around the mission and purpose, these values and our vision and themes. And you will see all of those be brought to life as we continue between now and

2026, July 4th, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. So I'd like now to invite the panelists, to introduce themselves and share a little bit about the work that they do, Maria Carla, would you like to begin?

María Carla Chicuen ([00:04:42](#)):

Certainly. Thank you very much for the invitation. It's a privilege to be joined by my fellow panelists today and join the foundation on this important work leading up to the celebration. I am the founding executive director of CasaCuba preeminent center underdevelopment for the study of Cuban affairs and the preservation and celebration of Cuban heritage at Florida International University, FIU in Miami, Florida. We are a top Hispanic serving institution among the top largest universities in the country serving as an anchor institution in South Florida. And a big part of the story of FIU is the story of the Latino community, of the Cuban community. So we are really excited about the effort to build CasaCuba and have a center where we can explore the incredible contributions of the Cuban community and other Latino communities and immigrant communities to South Florida and beyond.

Dr. Megan Springate ([00:05:44](#)):

Great, thank you, Mary Ann?

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:05:48](#)):

Good afternoon or good morning, wherever you're calling or Zooming in from. Thank you again for the opportunity here. I'm with the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute and our vision statement is advancing the Hispanic community's diversity of thought, and that kind of wraps up the idea that not all of us think the same, we're not all from the same countries of origin. Many of us were also born here in the United States with family abroad. And at the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute, there are three kinds of main points to a lot of what we do. One is really hone in and celebrate the diversity of thought. Second is we have a flagship internship program where we provide opportunities for college students to learn about the public, the private sector, and the nonprofit sector. And then the last piece, I think is really the element that we incorporate acknowledging the fact that we come from different places, including the Western hemisphere. So we have a lot of programming around that as well, to educate even some of our own Latino, Hispanic, Latinx members here in the United States. Again, honor to be here.

Dr. Megan Springate ([00:06:59](#)):

Great. Thank you so much, Omar. Would you like to say a few words?

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:07:04](#)):

Certainly Saludos. My name's Omar Eaton-Martinez. I'm the assistant division chief for historic resources at an organization called The Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission. Part of my portfolio is to help manage an aggregate of historic house museums, archeological parks, an aviation museum, and a mill museum. As we continue to strive for inclusive interpretation and community engagement, we have definitely focused and leaned in on Latino community engagement where this past fall, we even started our very first Latinas in Aviation festival at our College Park Aviation Museum. So I've been able to do this work around Latinidad in different organizations like this one, the National Park Service, and the Smithsonian. And I'm honored to be here with you all my fellow panelists, thank you.

Dr. Megan Springate ([00:08:01](#)):

Great. Thank you. Patricia?

Patricia Mota ([00:08:04](#)):

Hi, good afternoon, good morning, depending on where you are. Thank you for the invitation to join you all. I am a proud Latina, proud Mexican American first-generation college student first-generation professional, and the proud daughter of immigrants. My background evolved from co-founding a nonprofit to corporate marketing at an energy company higher education, and back to nonprofit at HACE. And most recently also a co-founder for a startup in FinTech. I proudly serve as President and CEO for the Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement. We are a national nonprofit based in Chicago and our mission since 1982 is to positively impact workplaces by cultivating the pipeline of Latinx talent providing Latinos the insight, access, and development to be successful in their careers. And we carry out this mission the way that we carry out, as you can imagine, has evolved over time, but we carry out this mission through three core pillars.

Patricia Mota ([00:09:07](#)):

One is through talent acquisition, so programs, services, events, where we're actively connecting anyone from intern to senior executive-level roles to our employer partners across the country. The second area being around pipeline and leadership developments, it starts as young as high school to senior leader programs. These are cohort model trainings that, through individual leadership assessments, coaching, culturally relevant content, but importantly and what I'm most proud of, is creating a multi-generational support network across the country, where we have folks more senior in their careers coming as subject matter experts, as guest speakers, as trainers to those getting started and to those in their careers doing the same for our students. And lastly, the third final areas around thought leadership. And so this is our diversity officer roundtable executives leadership tour, our ERG/BRG symposiums, events, and opportunities where we actively bring our alumni and partners together to share best practices, and most importantly, connect and network. It's a pleasure to be here and I'm excited for this conversation.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:10:13](#)):

We're really excited to hear from our esteemed panelists on a variety of topics today. Please feel free to unmute your mic and share your thoughts with the team. Without further ado, let's dig into question number one. The Pew Research Center data indicates that only 3% of Latinos use the terminology Latinx over Latino. What is your preference in the terminology that is used? Omar, would you mind getting us started?

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:10:43](#)):

Sure, absolutely. Been a great debate for a long, long time. For me, I prefer, if I had to choose within those two choices, Latinx, Latino, or in Spanish we say Latine. Usually, if I'm referring to myself personally, I would say Latino. If I'm referring to a group or an aggregate of people, I would say Latinx to be more inclusive. But really, in terms of my own personal identification, I usually just say I'm a Black Puerto Rican. That's what I usually just say. I like to be specific. I think within Latinidad it's really important to honor that specificity, honor that diversity, honor that plurality that we have in this demographic. I think it's a wonderful microcosm of what this country is, to show all the diversity that it has, but also to honor the fact that we have this confluence of different cultures that are connected to Africa, to Indigenous cultures, to Spain, but also to understand that there is sort of an asymmetric imbalance between all of them, right?

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:11:58](#)):

So we have to honor the fact that not everybody knows about, sometimes, that we have, you know, Costa Rican Americans or people from Uruguay Americans, We get a lot of attention to Mexican Americans typically, Puerto Rican, Cuban Americans, Salvadorian Americans, but usually not the others. And there are so many people that make up this demographic, so I think it's really important to lean into that fact

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:12:26](#)):

I think you're exactly right. Omar. It looks like we've got the chat kind of on fire right now. <Laugh> with everybody having a great discussion that you kicked us off into. Would anybody else like to share their thoughts on this question?

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:12:39](#)):

Yeah, I just wanted to add to Omar's very, very much on point very eloquent as well, to capture the diversity. And as I mentioned, and in some of your themes, you know, this is an opportunity to invite a lot of people and invite different conversations and so I love the different points of the themes. And again, I think it's one of those things where we need to learn and know who our audience is and if it falls in any area, right? So if I'm talking to as the President CEO of CHLI to incoming students or interns, they're probably more Latinx. You know, it's also kind of a generational type of thing in some cases. I'm a lot older than them, so for me, you know, it's probably more Latino. But to Omar's point, I usually refer to myself as an American of Mexican heritage.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:13:35](#)):

I was born here. I was born in a farmworker camp in central California and my parents are of Mexican heritage. And so that's just who I am. And because we are the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute and we do follow the census information, just the information identified from the Pew, all the words are, you know, Hispanic. And so again, I think it just really depends on the audience that you're speaking to. I know that's not super helpful for some other people who aren't comfortable with that, right? They wanna give us one name, but I think that's the whole point of us is that we're not one name.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:14:20](#)):

I appreciate your point. And on some level, you have to recognize that there's a privilege in avoiding discomfort and confront the reality that things are a lot more complicated than you've been taught. There are a lot of people with histories and cultures that are really rich and just waiting to be brought into the conversation. Would anyone else like to comment on this question?

María Carla Chicuen ([00:14:41](#)):

I really appreciate Omar's and Mary Ann's really excellent and inspiring reflections particularly, Mary Ann, your comment about we're not one name really resonates with me. Being born in Cuba, growing up in Havana, I always identified as Cuban. I am very proud of my Cuban roots and the opportunity to honor my heritage. But coming to the U.S., Becoming an American citizen, and being part of a greater Latino or Latinx community also gives me a lot of pride. I think there's so much beauty in having resources and options at our disposal. And personally, I think, you know, it's wonderful that folks can, can choose how they would like to be identified, whether that's Latino, that's Latinx, that's a country-

specific identifier what matters is that we are using the term that aligns with our personal reference and that we feel comfortable, that we are expressing ourselves individually, you know, to the fullest.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:15:42](#)):

Exactly what it's about.

Patricia Mota ([00:15:44](#)):

Well, just to add to everybody's point. I think we're looking at a community that represents at least, you know, 27 countries of origin, and here in the U.S., first, second, third generation not all of us speak Spanish, maybe Spanglish, right? And I think that there's so much richness to that. I mentioned earlier, right, I personally identify, I love Latina and Mexican American is my identity. But also, being similar to what Mary Anne mentioned, right. We're Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement, and iChi our communications, we use the words interchangeably, right. Whether it's through language or through written communications. And at the end of the day, if we're working with individuals or individual groups is asking them how they would prefer if it's an event or a special round table conversation, you know, if you're not sure it's always asking. And the last thing I did wanna say is one of my favorite reads last year was the book by Paola Ramos, which was "Finding Latinx." And so I love that book because he gives you a different perspective on the term and also it just had conversations with the undocumented community to farmworkers and really looking at it from a different lens.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:16:57](#)):

We always appreciate a good reference here, so thank you very much, Patricia. We've got a question in the chat. It looks like there was a question about the difference between Chicano and Latino /Hispanic. Would anyone like to address that question?

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:17:18](#)):

So I'll give that a little bit of a, I'm not the historian here, but I'll give a little bit of texture on that coming from California. So there was a time when there was a specific group mainly in California, the Southwest states. There was somebody who mentioned earlier that, you know, the Southwest state used to be part of Mexico and part of Texas. And so there was a sense of really just kind of feeling not heard and being discriminated against. And this really fell more on a lot of our young, now what I would refer to young Latinx or Latino or Hispanic and predominantly men of Mexican heritage, not necessarily born in Mexico, but of Mexican heritage. And like Patricia mentioned earlier, there was also a number of them who maybe weren't fluent in Spanish because if you think about their parents, their parents were saying, "look, you kind of have to learn the language and we don't really know the language that well, so don't speak Spanish as much, 'cause you're gonna get in trouble," right? So there's this group of young people that were working in the service armed forces, what have you, and there just was an uprising. And the way that they used one word, at the time, to kind of share and talk about their shared experience and their shared struggles and the discriminations was by referring to the word Chicano. And so it's very much about a certain demographic and a certain time and place in our American history of Latinos. I think there are some people who still refer to, I know one of my grandfathers, he's still like a die-hard Chicano, you know. That's his whole thing, right? And that's him, that's part of who he is and that's part of his culture. And you know, I didn't grow up with it, so I don't have that same connection. But he was part of that movement in Southern California mainly. And so that's, you know, again, that's my little piece to add to that. I'm sure there's probably some, you know, wonderful historian in the chat or somebody else who could add to this or give us a reference. I do usually refer people to the work of Dr.

David Hayes- Bautista from UCLA who is the guy that I would go to. And if he was here, I'd ask him, <laugh>

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:19:54](#)):

Excellent. We think that a little piece is a big piece. It's more than I knew. So I have to say thank you very much for that, for adding that to our conversation. And I couldn't have asked for a better segue into question number two. It really centers on the idea of heritage and culture that you referenced for your friend. So the census bureau 2020 count indicates that the population of Hispanics and Latinos in the United States has grown to represent almost 20% of the U.S. Population. Latinos, Hispanics, and Chicanos have a rich heritage and culture. How have members of your specific community shaped America? Maria, Carla, would you like to get us started?

María Carla Chicuen ([00:20:38](#)):

Thank you, thank you for the opportunity. Waking up in Miami, in South Florida, every day I look around and I see physically the manifestation of all the contributions that our community has brought to the U.S. And, I think that I'm privileged to live in such an example of what we can do when given the opportunity and having the resources. It's a wonderful showcase of our values you know, of our pride of our growth as a community. As we are building CasaCuba we are being very aware that we must honor the incredible diversity within even just the Cuban community, but certainly within our larger community. We are not a monolith.

María Carla Chicuen ([00:21:33](#)):

We are always thinking, within our team, how can we bring in the different perspectives, different life experiences, different backgrounds as we're shaping this vibrant cultural center that we hope is a testament to really the excellence and contributions of our greater community. And we need that representation everywhere. We need that representation in the media, in our boardrooms, in our elected offices, because there really is no single story that represents our Latino, our Hispanic, and our Chicano communities. So we can, I think a big part of the work starts by acknowledging that we have different perspectives. You know, we have different lived experiences that are based on our geography, based on how we identify ourselves even our religion, for example, even our generation, we will have a different story to tell. And our duty is to be able to hear and use all of our platforms at our disposal to make sure that those stories are not just heard, but that they stay and they inform generations to come.

María Carla Chicuen ([00:22:41](#)):

We feel a great sense of urgency as we're building CasaCuba because we know that a big part of our Cuban community has a lot of, you know, first accounts that we want to preserve. We need to build CasaCuba and capture all those stories. In our FIU, even beyond CasaCuba, we're doing a lot of work within the public humanities, and testimonials and record-keeping is really an incredible field that's growing, and that we think, I think, we're really trying to get it right. And so it's a daily work for us to make sure that we are capturing the stories, that we are representing them, and that they're being preserved, that they're never lost.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:23:30](#)):

Excellent, I love what you said about there not being a single story and necessarily understanding Latinidad as a variety of perspectives. That's something we're definitely keeping in mind. Patricia, would you like to comment?

Patricia Mota ([00:23:45](#)):

Sure, I think of the economic contributions, I think of, for example, being that our community represents 1.7 trillion purchasing power 2.7 trillion power GDP, meaning if our U.S. Hispanic, Latinx, Latino cohort was a country, it would be the seventh largest country. And in terms of the purchasing power and the GDP, a good majority of that is being led by Latina. So the women in these households over 80% that are key decision makers when it comes to economic decisions, healthcare decisions. And so to that end, Latinas are also opening businesses, their own businesses, depending on the source, six to seven times faster than any other demographic group, and so that is powerful. And while that is great and that's a significant impact that we think about what this country needs, but especially the support that's needed moving forward. Yet when you look at pay, Latinas on average earn 55 cents to the dollar compared to their white male counterpart. Underpaid, right?

Patricia Mota ([00:24:57](#)):

When you look at representation, let's say corporate boards, for example, we're looked at the last decade at around 4%. And so there's initiative and there's movement there, such as the Latino Corporate Directors Association that's doing some change there but that needs to be accelerated. And so I think that there's a lot of positives in terms of the intersectionality that our community represents and how important and pivotal that is for the creating allyship and really moving and progress for this country, but also the economic contributions that we represent. And I think it's imperative that we share and that we have these conversations because while we may be part of the community, sometimes we're not aware of this data and the statistics. And so it's important that we're not only familiarizing ourselves with this information, but also sharing.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:25:46](#)):

Agreed. And I love that word you use, intersectionality. It's a great lens for making sure that we're looking at a lot of different perspectives and a lot of different lived realities. Omar, Did you have a comment?

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:25:57](#)):

Yes, I definitely do. I like to think about the different contributions, you know, starting with my father. My father was born and raised in Santurce, Puerto Rico. He was recruited to work at NASA to be one of the first cohorts of Puerto Ricans recruited from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez that came to work at NASA. He had a 40 year career there where he was able to work on multiple projects nationally and internationally. And as a result of his success and some of his colleagues' success, literally, NASA has been recruiting there for the last 50 years. And now of the bulk of the Puerto Ricans that have worked at NASA over the years have come from that recruitment, and my father was the first. And his story is honored in the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:26:53](#)):

I like to think about people who inspire me like Alfonso Shomburg who has a New York Public Library named after him because he gave the inaugural collection to that library, which really underscored the existence of Black culture in a pan-African way. So looking at the Latinidad across different races and phenotypes, understanding that Latinos can present like me or like my colleagues and everything in between. I think about the great Roberto Clementa, who was the first Latino in the Baseball Hall of Fame and was also the first baseball player to petition the Major League Baseball to honor Dr. King's death. 'Cause, You know, opening day literally was a few days opening day was a few days after he was

assassinated and he rallied the troops and got them to postpone opening day to honor this great man's passing. And so I believe that Puerto Ricans and other Latino have had a great legacy of advocacy for humanity. And I think that those are things that can never be understated in our country today.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:28:16](#)):

Excellent. Thank you, Omar. You have such a bright and vibrant legacy I'm so, I don't know, just, I'm inspired by the work of your father. One thing that I did want to point out very quickly, it seems Major General Valenzuela has joined us. Major General, could you introduce yourself?

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:28:35](#)):

Sure, I'm Freddie Valenzuela and I spent 33 years in the United States Army, retired, have since published several books opened a foundation to give scholarships to all the soldiers that I buried from the Afghan and Iraq War. Um. I have a lovely wife of 56 years, two children, and four grandchildren.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:29:00](#)):

Excellent. Thank you. Is there anyone who'd like to comment on question number two before we move on to number three?

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:29:08](#)):

I just wanted to very quickly just remind everyone that we have also had many members of our collective communities run for president of the United States and also our members of Congress, either on the House or the Senate. And there is a growing interest right now, with the new Office of Diversity and Inclusion in Congress to get even more Latino, Latinx, Hispanic talent in the halls, in the rooms of Congress. Whether we all like politics, one side or the other or not you might be surprised that the rules affect us in so many ways. And it's important that our faces and our experiences be considered in those discussions and they will only be considered in those discussions if we're there. So I encourage those of you who have an opportunity to serve in public service. Thank you, General Valenzuela for your service to consider that, because whether it's at an early age in the middle of your career, maybe after you retire we need your voice. We need your input, we need your experiences.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:30:31](#)):

We certainly do. Jeybean Castro has been doing some amazing work on the hill. If anyone is interested, go ahead and Google him and you'll be able to see some of his accomplishments. Third question, the Latino, Hispanic, and Chicano communities are geographically, culturally, and racially diverse. How can we ensure that all these narratives are told accurately and fully? Mary Ann, would you like to get us started?

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:30:59](#)):

Sure, I think it's one of the very first words that you have under your theme to invite. I think that the invitation is very important. I have a background in corporate marketing and I remember sometimes people would say, "well, we're gonna translate that flyer." Or in the community, "we're gonna translate that flyer and we're gonna get that flyer out." Back in the day when we used to print things, okay? I know some of you don't remember that, but when we used to print information and people would say "oh, and just send the flyers here, put 'em there, whatever." And I remember that really bothered me because putting information out is not an invitation. You know, my mother in Brownsville, Texas, grew

up with signs that said, no Blacks, no Mexicans, no dogs, okay? So those are the kinds of signs that she saw. So just putting up flyers and putting up posters, that's not an invitation. And so I really encourage a lot of emphasis on invitation. Yes, there may be people, certain communities that you personally aren't familiar with, but I think this collective group, and that's why we're so excited to be here with America250, is that it's okay if you don't know the community, this is part of that to say "we may not know you, but we really genuinely want you to be part of this." And it's a genuine invitation to be part of the conversation. So I think the big thing for me is it's okay if you don't know the group, go ahead and invite them.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:32:33](#)):

But you know Dr. Carey, if I might just add I'm a little bit older than this group. I gotta tell you I'm from a different generation, Pluto or Mars, maybe you will call it. But let me take you back to how I grew up. First of all if you go back to the '40s when I came around and into the '60s, I was already fighting a war, and the only way we knew about Chicano was in California. That's kind of what we knew. Some of us weren't even Hispanics. We weren't allowed to speak Spanish to start with in the state of Texas. But I think the fallacy comes, and I appreciate the comments by Mary Ann from a congressional perspective. But my 30 years in the army, the first 10 years I was an other, the second 10 years I was Caucasian, and the third 10 years they forced me to say that I was Hispanic, forced. How did they force me? Well, the minute I labeled myself Hispanic, the next question from the federal government, well, what kind of Hispanic are you? Are you Puerto Rican, Mexican Cuban? Are you from Central America, South America? Are you Canary island? Are you from Portugal, from Brazil? And so consequently, that's a volunteer statement. Many of us in our modesty, in our DNA and culture, from a volunteer perspective, may not want to say where it is we come from. First of all, I'm a half-breed. So I bet you I'd be willing to bet you, most of us are. So therefore, what nationality do you actually admit to? And I have 29 nephews and nieces, all half-breeds. I think I've mentioned that before my children and grandchildren fall in those categories.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:34:09](#)):

So it's all about identification. But in today, if an immigrant were to identify in any one of those categories, from a volunteer perspective, if their parents came in illegally, then they would be putting the onus on the parents. And a lot of people will not admit volunteer-wise. So therefore we are dividing into so many groups. We all don't look the same, we don't cook the same, we don't dance the same, we're different, and you can't just brush us together. It's a pretty tough issue where we find ourselves today. But as you go back to my days some of these things weren't even around and to hear Latinx, I'm clueless, and only 3% of the country understand that piece. Now it may be an economic issue, maybe a whatever. But my identification, going back to one of your questions, is I'm an American of Hispanic heritage, and I think that resolves my whole issue. And they can label me the way they want to, but in our days, and I'm only the fourth American of Hispanic Heritage in 240 years to be a General officer. That's impossible to believe we've only had 19 since. So the system, we're growing, and it's good to hear the Congress, but even then we're split, Republicans and Democrat Hispanics, and that becomes another political issue that I won't discuss. So we have our own divisions, within our heritage, which is kind of interesting. Sorry for the comment.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:35:39](#)):

No, no, we appreciate the comment. There's no need to apologize because I think all of these are really, really rich contributions to our discussion. So thank you. María, Carla, did you have a comment?

María Carla Chicuen ([00:35:52](#)):

I think this discussion builds upon, you know, my previous reflections in response to the second question, but I think if we think about this beyond our community, humanity in general, I think fostering a sense of curiosity, a sense of appreciation for diversity. If those are entrenched values that we can cultivate, starting on our dinner table with our children, with our families, by having conversations that showcase that it's wonderful to learn from the diverse experiences of others, you know, wherever they are, then we can really get closer, right. To be able to tell our story without fear of biases fear fear even of attacks, particularly when we're living in times of so much polarization, so much misinformation. There is genuine fear in sharing our story, in raising our voices.

María Carla Chicuen ([00:37:01](#)):

And I think that the first step to make sure that narratives are being told accurately, is be able to share your own narrative, right? You know, I'm a history major, I go back to the source, right? And we wanna make sure, I always come back to the work of building CasaCuba, it's my day to day it's not a job, It's a mission that we have, that we want to do now, and we take it with incredible responsibility. How can we make sure that everyone is telling stories? And even within the Cuban community, we hear a lot that there is, you know, the Cuban story or the story about the Cuban American community, and some members of the community might feel the expectation within their own families, their own community, or even pressures by the greater society and the media to adhere to one narrative, to one story. When in reality, there are as many stories as members of our community we can share and more and more. So I think it'll boil down to <affirmative> eliminating that fear, fostering appreciation for diversity, fostering curiosity, and making sure that everyone is empowered to be free to tell their own story.

Patricia Mota ([00:38:12](#)):

Thank you. Yeah, I just wanna add to that. And I appreciate all the comments, especially, you know, General Valenzuela mentioned regarding the fear aspect and even María right now, talking about that. It starts with you, right? And so I think it's being able to share your own story in terms of how you identify your own story, your own narrative. But I remember earlier on in my career when I was meeting senior leaders and executives and asking them to share their story of Latinidad, their backgrounds, there was a lot of hesitation, right? We were looking at "no, I'm not gonna go speak in front of my corporation. I'm at the executive level. I don't wanna talk about it." And now we're seeing a shift where there's more pride and then you see the empowerment that happens to their colleagues or employees or those that look up to them. I remember one energy company that we work with around 2015 we asked for their highest ranking Latina.

Patricia Mota ([00:39:12](#)):

Yeah high, you know, short stature, blonde hair, blue eyes comes in for the very first time leading their engineering department and announced in this program that we had, announced in front of everybody about her Mexican heritage. She announced about how she went around with her mother cleaning houses and how that impacted her. And everyone's jaw drop <laugh>, you know, in the audience because they never thought she was Latina, she was Mexican American. And that ripple effect of the Latinos within this company that said "oh, we have someone like us here" just is super empowering. And so I just say that to say it's respecting everyone's journey and where they are in terms of sharing that narrative, in comfortability, but it does start with each of us, right, and sharing that. And the second piece I do wanna say, I think I saw it in the chat earlier, is supporting the American Latino Museum. I

have some friends that are leading this initiative and I think that would be a huge win for our community to ensure that our stories, our narratives, our history is exhibited there.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:40:17](#)):

I wanted to kind of just add a couple of things. First of all, General, you're amazing that <laugh>, you're amazing that was great. I'm so glad that you made it and so we could hear your testimony. I just wanna also piggyback off what Mary Ann said earlier in terms of inviting us, because it's not just an invitation, it's a cultivation, right? You wanna cultivate these relationships. I think in the past, even in the recent past, we've been invited to the table for an event for a short time. And then once that person has accomplished what they wanted to accomplish, that relationship goes by the wayside. And I hope that through America250, we learn to do better, that we learn to cultivate relationships, that we're not paternalistic in our approaches, that we really engage with each other in an equitable way to have equitable partnerships.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:41:12](#)):

And I was thinking about my experience because one of the things I did in the past when I was a park ranger with the National Park Service, and I worked intimately for the office of the National Museum of the American Latino Commission, which are the commissioners that wrote the report that led to the museum that Patricia had just mentioned, and I could tell you that was really the first time in my life, as someone who's researched and studied and engaged with Latinidad for a long time, that I really fully understood the breadth of diversity of Latinidad in this country. Like, there's so many intersections, there's so many intersections. We can talk about ethnicity, if you want, we can talk about race, but we can also talk about whether someone just came to this country last year versus someone whose third or fourth generations and the border crossed over them, and everything in between.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:42:01](#)):

And so when we talk about Latino engagement, I just want to throw caution to the wind in the sense that, just to reiterate what some of my panelists said, we are not a monolith so this is gonna take some time. It should be an iterative journey that you should always go back again and again, to see which spaces that you left, because you're gonna miss something. Cause there's too many intersections, but give each other grace about that, right? Let's not jump on each other too quickly, but let's also continue to inform one another about all those intersections so that we can continue to address them in a responsible way.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:42:39](#)):

Dr. Carey can I just throw one last piece in? My daughter right now is the only female Hispanic Republican judge, now a justice of the Fourth Court of Appeal in San Antonio, Texas. The only one. And if I use her as an example, tremendous role model, but I think women of Hispanic heritage, women are gonna lead the fight. Nothing against us males but women are just more methodical, they're willing to stand up and voice their opinions much better, I believe, than some of us males, maybe because of the environment in which we are working at or whatever. And I challenge my lovely ladies on the panel, I think you are the ones that are gonna take us to the next level, only you 'cause I think you got a better crack at it.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:43:30](#)):

You're three-fers in a lot of senses. You're brilliant, you're good looking to boot, you're educated, you have it all. But I think you're gonna have to lead us along the way, because I think it's adversity, correction, diversity is much more open to the female than it is the male. And I think that, going back to what Omar said, if we can support this endeavor, if we can push this noodle down the road, I believe we'll get there a hell of a lot faster than we would if do it with us males, nothing against Omar, you and I, but what can I say?

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:44:06](#)):

Thank you, General. And just a question, next question. So what are the common misconceptions people have about the Latino, Hispanic, and Chicano communities? How can America250 help address these misconceptions and move the conversation forward with new narratives?

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:44:29](#)):

First of all, they think we're all Democrats, for one, but two we're quickly labeled. But if we're soon to be 70 million and we bring over \$900 billion to the economy, which is about \$180 million a minute we're a power to be reckoned with politically, militarily, socially, and economically. We are in the, we're in the lead run here. We can really pull this off. So I would just say that hell with labels. If we just come together, no greed, no (speaking Spanish), none of this stuff, you know, just put that aside and we stick together, I think we can pull it off. That's from an old guy.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:45:12](#)):

No, I love it. And I also wanted to tell the General that I'm sure, and congrats to your daughter. I'm sure a big reason that she's also successful is because she has you. And that's what we need more of.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:45:25](#)):

You need to tell her that, but go ahead. <Laugh>

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:45:28](#)):

We need more men who are supportive as well. So thank you for that. And I don't know Omar's accomplishments in supporting women, but I have a feeling kudos to you as well, dear.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:45:38](#)):

Absolutely.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:45:39](#)):

I wanted to just emphasize that, you know, we have a lot of museums as mentioned a lot of locals, regional museums. And to me, it just seems like the Americ250 initiative is really more about a collective of celebrations versus, you know, including all the stuff that wasn't all that fun and all that cool. Like it's not like we're saying it didn't exist. It's just that we're gonna say, you know, we're 250 years old, we're awesome, but then we did this and then we did that and then we did this. Like, I don't know that we need to say that.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:46:17](#)):

I think that we need to be like, "we're 250 years old and wow, this is what we've done. This is what, you know, our communities have contributed." And it's, you know the fireworks in the sky, not to dig

through and figure out, you know, did they really do it right? Or who really helped them or was it EEO? Was it affirmative action? Was it blah, blah, blah? I think the focus is just move on, celebrate and move on. And let's use this as a platform and opportunity to spread the word of celebrations and accomplishments that maybe some children and people in different communities haven't had the chance to see in their communities because of whatever else is in their environment. That's my two pesos.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:47:04](#)):

I like those two pesos, would anyone else like to comment?

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:47:08](#)):

Yeah, I would say. I'm sorry. Go ahead. Go ahead.

Patricia Mota ([00:47:12](#)):

Thank you, Omar. I did wanna add that there was research done last year from the We Are All Human Foundation that surveyed Latinos about 2,000 respondents, I believe they had from that. And 77% responded not being familiar with the power behind our Hispanic/Latinx community, meaning the purchasing power, economic contributions. And so first, I think the perceptions out there, you know, we have to drive that by our own stories, like we said earlier, but also creating awareness for our own selves in terms of the data and contributions behind our community. And then the last thing I did wanna say is there's also research by the Latino Donor Collaborative that measured perception of Latinos in the U.S. And so they survey non-Latinos, right? And we do see a shift, right? I think one of them being from the community being looked at as, from takers to contributors. And the survey done in 2012 was that 70% of the respondents view Latinos as takers in terms of taking from the economy, in terms of cost of education and healthcare. Fast forward to 2021, 83 of the respondents view the community as contributors, especially when it comes to the purchasing power.

Patricia Mota ([00:48:29](#)):

So I think there's a positive direction, but I think there's a lot more work that needs to be done there. And then the other one being that the perception that the majority of Latinos are undocumented, right? And today we've also seen a shift where not as significant, but where they show that the data, it appears that that perception went from a majority to at least 33% that believe that the community is undocumented. So I think, again, it starts with each of us in terms of just sharing the data and statistics and becoming familiar, and ensuring that we're helping change the narrative to a more positive direction. And that it truly is, right? What it truly is.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:49:13](#)):

I just wanted to respond to Mary Ann saying it's not a 3declaration, but really is a commemoration in a way that I make that distinction as a museum professional and public historian is to understand that commemoration involves some level of interrogation, right? So at some point, there are things that did go wrong and we harp on them to the point where we bring ourselves down too low mm-hmm <affirmative>. I don't think that's something that we should do. I think it's really just how any good leader or project manager, you do an event, you do a component of your project, and you assess and reassess and do better next time. And I think that this is the exact opportunity we have for this 250th and these years leading up to it. I also wanna kind of lean on the question that you asked, Dr. Carey, which was really for me, is that the debunking myth is the monolith. Now, I grew up born in D.C., raised

in Silver Spring, Maryland, my four walls of my home was Puerto Rico, right? Was Puerto Rico, pure, pure Puerto Rico, right? I step outside of those walls, I'm in Silver Spring, Maryland. I'm right in a major metropolis, right next to the nation's capital, which at the time was Chocolate City, right? And so there's a very skewed or monolithic way to view Blackness and Latinidad, right? To the point where I decided, or my parents and I decided, I should say, when I was a junior in high school to hyphenate my name, right? Because although both of my parents were born and raised in Puerto Rico, my father had an English surname and my mother's maiden name was Martínez, so it was a little bit more easier for people to comprehend

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:50:50](#)):

My Puerto Rican-ness with a Spanish surname. But my birth certificate just says Eaton, right? And so that in itself is a rebuke and part of my struggle to really deal with this idea of a monolith. We have to continue to interrogate it and bring up more nuance in how we treat each other and how we include each other in these conversations. And also, to riff off what Mary Ann and the General said, I mean, my daughter <laugh> my daughter, since she was nine years old has said that she's going to be the president of United States. She's 18 right now, she's at Virginia Commonwealth University, and she's a political science major and she's well on her way. And so I, wholeheartedly believe in what you said, General. Let the women lead. Let's get out the way.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:51:42](#)):

But lemme throw something in there real quick, I think it is important. You talked about the hyphenation. My daughter is Valenzuela could be hyphen McCleskey, but she chose, because she's in the political world, hell if I can't make on Venezuela, I'm sure in the hell not gonna draw in more white votes if I'm Valenzuela-McCleskey. So to her, she dropped the McCleskey, kept the Valenzuela as her surname because she felt that she couldn't make it that way, she was going to deceive others, have ill perceptions that she brought that anglicized name attached, and that would be cheating. And so it's a counterbalance there and she said "I'll stick with female Hispanic and I'll run with it." So, nothing against us males again but that's the world we live in. So I'm sorry to throw that in there.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([00:52:36](#)):

Oh, one more thing. We talked about what we've done for 250 years. You know, we were one of the first folks on the block. I mean, we were here way ahead of a lot of other folks, maybe not the Native American, but, but we have a hell of a story to tell. One challenge, I think, that I'm very fearful. I have four grandchildren, one young lady, brilliant as are my three grandsons. But the pandemic has set my three grandsons back one or two years. My fear is it didn't hurt my granddaughter at all. So with that being said because we don't do very well, I guess 45% of us don't get out of high school in one form fashion, if we're set back a year or two, that means we have to regain that momentum to get those males back in the fold. And so that's one of my biggest worries as a grandfather, but more so as a community of Hispanics.

María Carla Chicuen ([00:53:34](#)):

It's very hard to follow my peers after so much has been shared and I'm drawing so much inspiration from all of your journeys and all your reflections. I wanted to just draw very quickly, going back to your question, Carlene, on the issue, the misconception, right? Also that exists that we're single-issue voters that a lot of us, you know, really, really just care about whether it's immigration, whether it's identity politics. And I think this is a great platform, again, to showcase all of our diversity. Once again, we are

not a monolith. We have so many varying interests, opinions, and we should not, we cannot it's not possible to corner us right into one side of the spectrum or the other. And it's so important to showcase our diverse stories.

María Carla Chicuen ([00:54:28](#)):

It's so important to have ambassadors. Really, I think what's beautiful about having ambassadors, having role models, particularly for communities that are underrepresented, that are misunderstood, but there are so many misconceptions abound, is the power of inspiration, not just to inform and share truth, but just to inspire so that the next generations. And we've talked a lot about the power of women and what we can do. Well, women need to see women having a voice and in positions of power to be able to rise to their full potential. I take a lot of, you know, personal inspiration, and, you know, when I was in college, I was a Latino recruiter for the admissions office. We had a program for undergraduate minority recruitment and it was a place that I never thought I would be a part of. It was Harvard University. I had just come from Cuba a couple of years before, I was considered low income. I had just come from ESOL. I was learning English. You know, my parents had been working multiple jobs minimum wage throughout high school. My high school journey, I never thought that I would be able to afford a place like Harvard, much less be accepted. I thought it was reserved for the elite, the geniuses, and the millionaires. And when I saw that someone who looked like me and was from my community had applied and got accepted, I realized, wait a minute, it's not just me, but so many talented young men and women that I know, and I don't know, could also apply and get in. But I realized that for all of the information that's out there in case studies, there is not enough inspiration. So anything that I'm Americ250 can do to make sure that we are inspiring and we're reaching those folks who are hesitating whether to submit an application to college, whether to run for office, whether to share their story, you know, all it might take is that inspiring story, is that role model to make that difference in their lives and the community's life.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:56:30](#)):

Well said. I wanna say thank you for being that inspiring role model to all of those folks, right? And we've got just one more question that really gets at that question, that theme that we've talked about a little bit before about urban identity versus rural. So are there different degrees of cultural identity that happen in rural areas versus those that happen in urban areas? How is identity based on geographic location different? And this is a public question. So feel free to unmute your mic and jump in.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:57:03](#)):

<Affirmative>. Well, I can tell you growing up in a farmworker camp, we were always terrified if one of us had an emergency, 'cause it would take forever for the ambulance even to figure out where the hell we lived <laugh> so, you know, so we were always like super worried about those kinds of things. I think for me personally, and my husband is completely different, you know, he was born in Cuba, grew up in Miami, and so he doesn't understand the rural part. You know, sometimes I'm terrified of walking in certain streets and it's just because the way we grew up. It's just, you know, different aspects of it. And to the General's point, one of the other main concerns that we have right now too is not only are we losing some of our great men and their future potential,

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([00:57:54](#)):

But we're losing even extra more people who are living right now in rural communities and we're not able to access their school or jobs or have those kinds of opportunities through the pandemic because

they didn't have WI-FI access. I have a friend who lives in a rural part of Mississippi and he's been applying for jobs and he literally has to drive 30 minutes to get to a McDonald's to get online and use his laptop to upload his resume, to apply for jobs. So, you know, that's a really big part. I don't know how that gets included and how those stories get in there, but it is real, it still exists. It's gotten a little better in some areas, but we have a long way to go.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([00:58:44](#)):

Agreed.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:58:46](#)):

I grew up in the suburbs, but I've worked and lived in urban spaces like Atlanta, New York. When I was in New York City, I was a teacher and I taught in Bushwick, Brooklyn and I taught in the South Bronx. And the experience <laugh> the experience in New York itself is a whole nother level just because there's no place like it, to be honest with you. But it's just there was always this idea of an eternal foreigner, right? Like, these people, you know, no matter if you've been here for two or three generations in New York City, which is very possible sometimes four or five, or you just came from another Spanish speaking country the other day, but it didn't matter. Like they were all lumped together. And a quick example I give you is in my first teaching position, I taught sixth grade, self-contained bilingual in Bushwick, which is traditionally a Puerto Rican neighborhood.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([00:59:49](#)):

It started to gentrify and change a little bit and there were other Latinos coming in there a lot. There was a large increase of actual Mexican Americans and Columbian Americans living in that area. It's sort of near a subway train, which made it also more attractive to people with more wealth. And I can tell you, I had a classroom, it was supposed to be bilingual, which supposed to have indicated that all those children are not fully proficient in English, which is really not what bilingual education is, but that's how it was interpreted during the time that I was there. And then I come to find out and I have students in my class who've been in Brookly, if they weren't born here, they've been there since they were six months old, right? Like at this point there should have been no reason why they're not in a full English proficient class.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([01:00:44](#)):

So here I am, first-year teacher, definitely with the help of some other people, finding out ways to test them out of this class, which they should have never been in the first place. And then sort of the flip side of that is I had one student who was from the Dominican Republic, came here when he was two years old, he's 12 at the time that I get him in the classroom, he is not literate in English or in Spanish and they just continue to push them through. And so these are the type of experiences that happen in urban spaces. I can't imagine it just happens in urban spaces, but since we're doing the contract, I just thought I'd share that.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([01:01:28](#)):

Yeah, let me throw one from Texas. Probably different than all the other places that y'all live in, but San Antonio, Texas is really a blessing for a lot of us younger folks as we were growing up. The reason I mentioned that is because it's a city of amalgamation of cultures. Not only is it Mexican and Spanish, Native American, but also we had the fortunate migration of the Europeans. So to the north of San Antonio, you have the German to the south, the Polish, and the Czech, and to the west is the French. So

that amalgamation of cultures allowed a lot of us to come out of the rural areas to get educated in the urban areas. And now you see this paradigm shift, where we're all going back to the rural side to get away from the big city.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([01:02:15](#)):

So I think that transitional point, again, that paradigm shift really allowed a lot of us to get a better education, a better job, not necessarily to the Harvard side of the house, but nevertheless, and now we're mostly returning back to the rural areas as well. So now it's incumbent upon us to get the youth in the rural areas and do what Mary Ann said and that's to help get them, and get them the same opportunity and resources so they can carry on the ball.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([01:02:47](#)):

Thank you, General. For our final question of the evening, what are your hopes for America's future for 2026 and beyond?

Patricia Mota ([01:03:01](#)):

I think that, you know, we're really embracing the intersectionality that our community represents and leveraging that. I really think it's this community, you know, I have a board member who identifies as Afro-Cuban, right? And, you know, she shares with me stories in terms of spaces that she's in where they're like, "you're not Latina." And I think for her, it's having using that as a learning moment, right? And I think as tough as it may be for us, how are we really embracing those learning moments that we each come across to be able to ensure that we're creating awareness? Not only for ourselves, because we each come with biases right? We each have biases that we each carry, but that we get to a space that we're able to have courageous conversations to help generate awareness, and most importantly, build more inclusive and equitable spaces for all. So that not just do we have more representation of Latinos in leadership roles, but that we have those that are underrepresented in leadership roles.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([01:04:18](#)):

Excellent point. Would anyone else like to comment?

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([01:04:21](#)):

I think what we're doing now with America250, God willing, it'll carry on into 2026 and beyond. I think we have to go backward just as well as going forward, and that is to tell our story I've written books so that my grandchildren know exactly where it is that I came from. And I think we all have to tell our stories to the future generations America250 could be that transitional point to allow that to happen as we go backward and forward.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([01:04:54](#)):

Yeah. I'm looking forward to being able to have the collective of different stories. Obviously, this is one story of many that you are doing around the country and I'm looking forward to seeing the richness of the diversity among the Latino/Hispanic community among other communities. And I think it's a really good opportunity for the United States as a whole to really you know, maybe not just talk about diversity and how we're all really looking to speak on it and learn about it, but really to kind of put a little spotlight on it and show other people from around the world. The United States has been and continues to be you know, a, a beacon for immigrants, despite, you know, all the other things that have

happened. We were born and raised from people leaving another country and coming here for other opportunities.

Mary Ann Gomez Orta ([01:05:52](#)):

We have people nowadays still coming here for other opportunities. Maybe it wasn't exactly the way that they thought, maybe it hasn't exactly worked out the way that some people would like, but we're all still here. And we can all say we're, you know, American of, or we're American. And we can add the American word wherever we want and however we want. And so I think that's a really important piece that it would be, it would be nice. And I'm looking forward to seeing that richness in diversity to be able to share and learn. I'm looking forward to learning about other communities and cultures that I don't really engage with on a regular basis.

María Carla Chicuen ([01:06:33](#)):

To echo my peers. I am so hopeful. I know that we can make it happen that we can really recognize. And as Patrica said, embrace, you know, our diversity to leverage its strength so that we can bring more richness, more value to our communities. And something I think of often is that we stop seeing one another as abstract concepts or mere products of the stereotypes or shared stories that might partly define us, but that did not make up the whole of who we are. I am hopeful that so many more will have the opportunity to live with folks literally live or spend quality time with folks who represent groups that they know very little about. You know, like when I was in college, I lived four years in a college dorm with my four roommates, one Black American from Alabama, Portuguese American from Somerville, Massachusetts, Taiwanese raised in California, Hungarian from Budapest raised from throughout the world,

María Carla Chicuen ([01:07:35](#)):

And they had never met a Cuban who had been born in Cuba or raised in Miami. And so when they now think of someone from Miami or Cuban, they think of me. You know, I am a real person and they're excited about my story. You know, if I think if more of us were able to spend time with real people, if we knew the names and the faces of folks who represent many different communities I really believe that we would realize that what we have in common is far greater than the differences that might exist or that we perceive that might exist. So that's a big hope that I have that, that we'll have names to draw from that will encourage us to appreciate the incredible diversity that we are really blessed to have in this country.

Major General Alfred Valenzuela ([01:08:23](#)):

But, you know, before we look at diversity inclusion and equity with other races and other ethnicity groups, we really have a tremendous challenge within ourselves to look at our diversity and our inclusion and our equity, because we're so diverse. Unlike any other group, we are the most diverse. If we can pull this together, there's no doubt, again, socially, politically military economically we are a power to be reckoned with. And so just look at the other panelists, I mean you just can't beat this. And so I applaud all of you.

Omar Eaton-Martínez ([01:08:58](#)):

What that young man just said, absolutely. You know, the nuance is important for us to understand that my goal and my hope is always to, through my work that I do in museums and historical sites, to help people have transformational experiences so they can understand each other in a more nuanced

manner. But at the end of the day, what keeps me up, what keeps me excited about this work, what keeps me excited about America250 and other efforts is the possibility that we will continue to see the humanity in one another. If we do that, we win. It's just that simple.

Dr. Carleen Carey ([01:09:40](#)):

Very well said, Omar. Dr. Springate, Over to you.

Dr. Megan Springate ([01:09:42](#)):

Yes. Thank you. I'm just going to share the screen again at the end. This has been incredible. General Venezuela, I can't, you know, we don't cook the same and we don't dance the same. But it has been my honor to be in the presence of this amazing group of panelists. You have set us an incredibly high bar to meet in sharing all these stories and busting some of these stereotypes. And we are gonna do our very best to make sure that everybody continues to be invited and included and represented. Thank you all so much. There is a survey link that will be posted in the chat. If anyone not if anyone, we would really appreciate your feedback about the conversation that we just had. And again, please reach out to us, engage@america.org. Ee'd love to continue the conversation. To the panelists, my co-moderators, all the folks working furiously behind the scenes, thank you also very, very much for your time today and have an excellent rest of the week.