

# OVERVIEW OF STATUS OF LATINOS IN THE NYS JUDICIARY: The 2025 REPORT

## Preamble

In 2020, during my tenure as President of the Latino Judges Association (hereinafter, LJA), and in response to the effort to amend our state Constitution to effectuate then Chief Judge Janet DiFiore’s proposed Court Merger/Court Consolidation Plan, I undertook to analyze the status of Hispanic/Latino representation in the New York State (NYS) Judiciary. That analysis was intended to assist us in evaluating the merits of the proposal and determine the impact the proposed changes were likely to have on the Latino community’s ability to ascend to the judiciary. In connection therewith, I testified on behalf of the LJA at the joint public hearing of the Senate & Assembly Standing Committee’s on the Judiciary considering the concept of consolidating the New York State Courts.<sup>1</sup> During that testimony, I expressed our concerns about the disparate impact the proposal would have on communities of color. Numerous judicial, bar, civic and community organizations likewise testified.

The 2020 report<sup>2</sup>, ***“Overview of Latinos/Hispanics in the NYS Judiciary”***, assessed the then current state of Latino judicial representation, the varying rates of success in achieving access to the bench throughout the four judicial departments and whether those gains were obtained by appointment or election. The report concluded that while the Latino community had seen increases in the overall number of judges of Hispanic heritage over the years, the growth has been too slow and inadequate in keeping pace with the demographic representation of our community.

The LJA thereafter undertook to chronicle the history of Latino Judges in NYS. The “History Project” resulted in the production of a documentary film which captures the rich history of the rise of the Latino Judiciary in New York State. The film chronicled

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<sup>1</sup>

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DrtZ3BKXeBSA%26pp%3DygVJTnlzIFnlbmF0ZSBhbmQgQXNzZW1ibHkgU3RhbmRpbmcgQ29tbWl0dGVleiBvbiB0aGUgSnVkaWNpYXJ5IGhlYXJpbmcgMjAxOQ%253D%253D&data=05%7C02%7Csmanzane%40nycourts.gov%7C0c5a60998d7846e3fffc08dda5f3c48a%7C3456fe92cbd1406db5a35364bec0a833%7C0%7C638849188590093277%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIslAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoITWFpbGlldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=IU9bB%2FnraD8PEjftDuolkfKhghNEzEaqJBAiXLb9zOg%3D&reserved=0> (Justice Manzanet-Daniels testimony begins at 2:16:04, followed by Justice Guzman for PRBA and Justice Perez for DBA).

<sup>2</sup><https://latinojudgesassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/overview-of-latino-judges-2020-updated-with-preamble.pdf>

our association's growth from its first judge, the Hon. Emilio Nunez appointed in 1951, to 2024 the year of the film's release.<sup>3</sup>

Five years later, this updated report seeks to once again assess the status of Latino representation in the NYS Judiciary. As the instant report illustrates, gains have been realized in various courts, specific departments and regions of the state, while other departments and regions continue to operate within entrenched systemic impediments to diversification. Admittedly, in some regions of our state, the Latino/Hispanic percentage of the population is small, and hence the lack of Latino judges is expected. However, as this report explores, throughout the state there are communities with sizable Latino populations that have little or no judicial representation.

As was observed in the last iteration of this report, the lack of representation in communities with a Latino population is not by happenstance, but by design and choice. This overview, therefore, is intended to inform the community and serve as an advocacy tool for the various stakeholders within it. It seeks to assist the community in holding their leaders, the appointing and nominating authorities for the courts, to account throughout the state for the lack of Latino representation in the judiciary. While this 2.0 version, ***"The 2025 Report"***, of the *Overview of Latinos/Hispanics in the NYS Judiciary* report attempts to closely track the original format – adaptations have been made to incorporate new categories of review and eliminate sections that are no longer relevant.

I want to thank and acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of the new Chief Administrative Judge, the Hon. Joseph Zayas (and his team) for his willingness to provide some of the necessary data and internal Office of Court Administration (OCA) statistics needed for this analysis.<sup>4</sup> And a special thanks to my John Jay College Pipeline Program - Law Intern, Jasier Tejeda, for her assistance in researching and compiling the NYS demographic population data required for this report.

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Associate Justice  
Appellate Division, First Dept.

*Latino Judges Association,*  
*Board Director 2017-2019; 2021-2025 and Past President 2019-2021*  
*and Author of "OVERVIEW OF STATUS OF LATINOS IN*  
*THE NYS JUDICIARY: The 2020 Report"*

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rtim0XLV\\_MCnbt=1Cmsocid=c7812f9c1edd11f09cfe1b7d96b956e8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rtim0XLV_MCnbt=1Cmsocid=c7812f9c1edd11f09cfe1b7d96b956e8) or [LJA History Project: A Documentary Chronicling the History of Latino Judges in New York State - Historical Society of the New York Courts](#).

<sup>4</sup> New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Judicial Demographic Information, January 2025.

## NEW YORK STATE JUDICIARY – 2025

The New York State Court System is comprised of a variety of different courts, each of which will be explored individually and by judicial department.

The State of New York, as of July 1, 2024, has an estimated population of 19,867,248<sup>5</sup> and is made up of sixty-two (62) counties. Our New York State courts are made up of four (4) Judicial Departments (1st through the 4<sup>th</sup>) and thirteen (13) Judicial Districts. Our thirteen (13) judicial districts are comprised of the sixty-two (62) counties throughout the state. *See Chart below for breakdown.*

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENTS	JUDICIAL DISTRICTS	GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS
<b>1<sup>ST</sup> (FIRST)</b>  (2 districts/counties)	1 <sup>ST</sup>  12 <sup>TH</sup>	New York (Manhattan)  Bronx
<b>2<sup>ND</sup> (SECOND)</b>  (5 districts & 10 counties)	2 <sup>nd</sup> 11 <sup>th</sup> 13 <sup>th</sup> 10 <sup>th</sup> (2 counties) 9 <sup>th</sup> (5 counties)	Kings Queens Richmond ( <i>Staten Island</i> ) Nassau & Suffolk ( <i>Long Island</i> )  Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland & Westchester
<b>3<sup>RD</sup> (THIRD)</b>  (3 districts & 28 counties)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (7 counties)  4 <sup>th</sup> (11 counties)  6 <sup>th</sup> (10 counties)	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Sullivan & Ulster Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren & Washington Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Otsego, Schuyler, Tioga & Tompkins
<b>4<sup>TH</sup> (FOURTH)</b>  (3 districts & 22 counties)	5 <sup>th</sup> (6 counties)  7 <sup>th</sup> (8 counties)  8 <sup>th</sup> (8 counties)	Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Onondaga, Oneida & Oswego  Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe (Rochester), Ontario, Seneca, Steuben Wayne & Yates  Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans & Wyoming

<sup>5</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: New York.](#)

For purposes of this analysis, it is important to note that although our court system is administered as one, its judges fall into one of two overall categories: “State Paid judges” and “Non-State Paid Judges” (otherwise known as our Town & Village Justices). The latter have their judicial salaries provided for by their local municipalities, while the former are paid by the state. The Chief Judge and the Office of Court Administration administer the Town & Village Courts of New York, and the justices appointed and elected to those courts are bound by the same Rules of Judicial Conduct as their state-paid counterparts.

Accordingly, while the diversity analysis from the courts generally focuses on the “State Paid” judges, this report will attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the full state-wide ranks of New York State’s judiciary.<sup>6</sup> Additionally due to the great geographic expanses of the territory and the varying court structures between NYC courts (known as “downstate courts”) and “upstate courts” (north of the lower Westchester/Hudson Valley region) those distinctions are likewise highlighted herein.

## OVERVIEW OF LATINOS/HISPANICS IN THE NEW YORK STATE COURT SYSTEM

### I. LATINO/HISPANIC REPRESENTATION IN THE JUDICIARY

The following analysis and charts provide an overview of the current composition of New York State’s court system.<sup>7</sup>

Judicial categories	Total # of Judges	Total # of Latino Judges	Total Percentage of Latino Judges
State Paid Judges	<b>1364</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>8.80%</b>
Non-State Paid Judges	<b>1729</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.578%</b>
Total NYS Judiciary	<b>3093</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>4.5%</b>

<sup>6</sup> The mandatory collection of demographic information required under JL§ 212 **only** applies to state-paid judges and justices, not to the Town and Village Courts throughout the state.

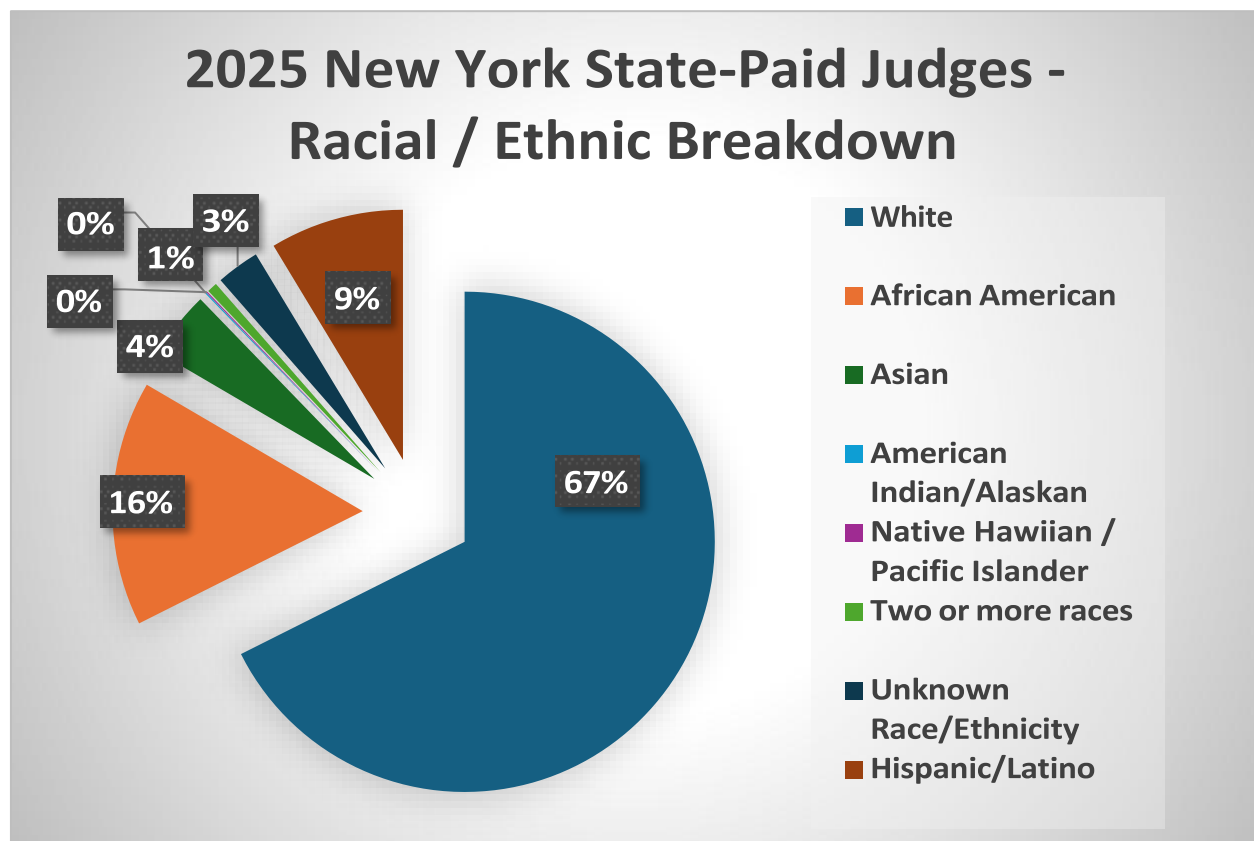
<sup>7</sup> New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Judicial Demographic Information, January 2025.

## STATE PAID JUDGES

According to the Office of Court of Administration records the current ethnic breakdown is as follows:

State Paid Judges	White	Black/ African American	Asian	American Indian/ Alaskan	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Unknown Race/ Ethnicity	Hispanic/ Latino
1364	922	216	59	1	1	9	38	118* LJA# (120)
Percentage of total # of judges	69.5%	16.3%	4.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.7%	2.8%	8.9%

\*LJA has 120 “state paid” judges of Latino/Hispanic heritage on our membership roster and 10 Town & Village Justices. *Our list, unlike the breakdown above, includes Latino members who are multi-racial/ethnic.* We believe this accounts for the disparity in our respective numbers.

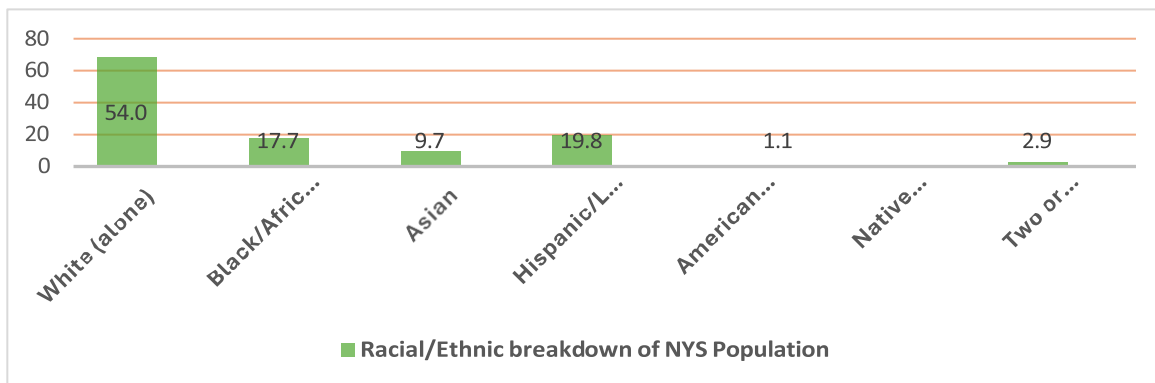


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<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

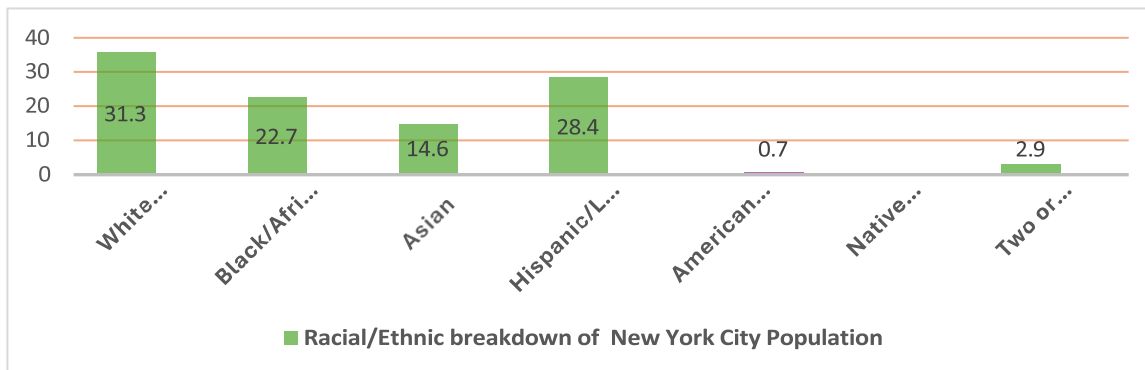
This data while informative, does not permit a full and comprehensive understanding of the status of Latinos in the judiciary. Hence, an analysis of this data against New York State's demographic population breakdown is critical. Understanding the population breakdown for each racial/ethnic group is necessary in assessing whether, and to what degree, each group is represented in this vital third branch of government.

According to the available data on the United States Census Bureau, as of July 1, 2024 **New York State** has approximately 19,867,248 citizens. (See below charts which provide the percentage breakdown by racial/ethnic groups).<sup>9</sup>



Note: The percentages quoted exceed 100%, but the graph reflects the date on the official website.

New York City has a population of approximately 8,478,072. (See below charts which provide the percentage breakdown by racial/ethnic groups)



The racial/ethnic population chart below outlines the data for New York State on the left and for the United States on the right. The data reveals that Hispanics/Latinos have reached close to twenty percent (**20%**) of the population in both NYS and in the nation.

<sup>9</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: New York city, New York; New York](#)

In New York City the data shows that Hispanics/Latinos represent 28.4% of the population.<sup>10</sup>



Column	New York				United States			
White	52.8%	±0%	10,323,977	±17,121	57.1%	±0%	191,347,650	±60,466
Black	13.3%	±0%	2,609,429	±19,500	11.8%	±0%	39,569,312	±95,079
Native	0.2%	±0%	38,001	±2,807	0.5%	±0%	1,733,272	±16,041
Asian	9%	±0%	1,769,413	±15,843	5.9%	±0%	19,769,752	±44,702
Islander	0%	±0%	5,940	±1,644	0.2%	±0%	592,077	±19,817
Other	1%	±0%	188,996	±14,563	0.6%	±0%	1,949,065	±39,660
Two+	3.9%	±0%	763,314	±23,499	4.4%	±0%	14,813,501	±122,033
Hispanic	19.8%	±0%	3,872,146	±570	19.5%	±0%	65,140,276	±8,848

As the below chart demonstrates, Hispanics/Latinos continue to be underrepresented in the NYS judiciary as compared with our representation in the population broadly. Despite representing twenty (20) percent of the NYS population, our judicial representation in the state-paid judges we lag by double digit margins, currently at an 11% deficit. Judges of Asian descent likewise have a representative deficit between their population in the NYS and their representation in the judiciary, currently at a 4.6%. Both Whites and Black/African Americans have representation in the judiciary which exceeds their respective groups population percentages in NYS.

State Paid Judges	White	Black/ African American	Asian	Native American /Alaskan	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Unknown Race/ Ethnicity	Hispanic /Latino
<b>1364 (OCA data)</b>	<b>922</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>118*</b> <b>LJA# 120</b>
<b>Percentage of total # of judges</b>	<b>69.5%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>8.9% (9%)</b>
<b>Percentage of NYS Population (see below)</b>	<b>53% (52.8)</b>	<b>13% (13.3)</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>0% (0.2)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4% (3.9)</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>20% (19.8)</b>
<b>Percentage of Disparity</b>	<b>+16.5 %</b>	<b>+3.3%</b>	<b>-4.6%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>+3.3%</b>	<b>+1.8</b>	<b>-11%</b>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2023). American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter profile page for New York <<http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US36-new-york/>>

## Court Administration

The New York State (NYS) Judiciary is led by the Chief Judge of the State, the **Hon. Rowan Wilson**, who was nominated by Gov. Kathy Hochul and confirmed by the NYS Senate in April 2023. The Chief Judge presides over the state's highest court, the Court of Appeals and administers the courts through the Office of Court Administration (hereinafter OCA). Judge Wilson is the first African American to serve as Chief Judge in NYS.

In turn, the OCA is led by the Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts (hereinafter, CAJ), the **Hon. Joseph A. Zayas**. *Justice Zayas is the first Latino ever to hold this position in the history of the courts of NYS. Since taking over the helm, they have assembled and added to the administrative team at OCA.*

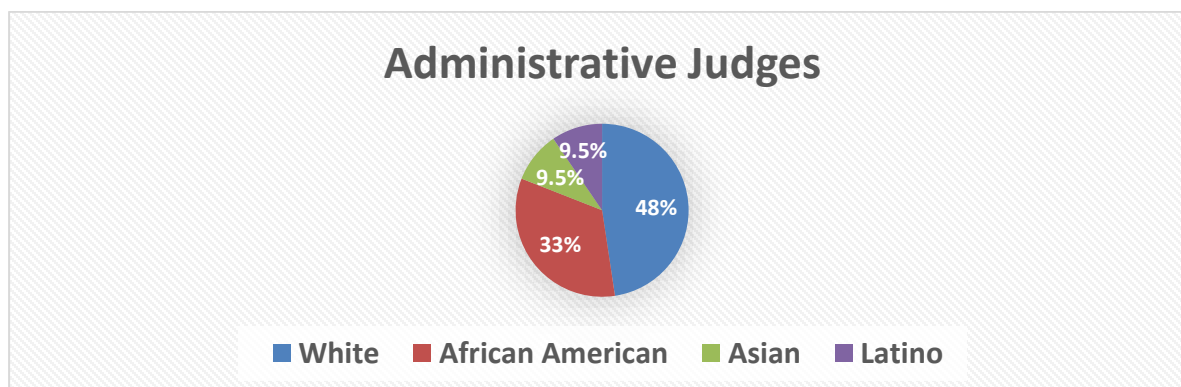
The current administrative team of the CAJ includes:

- **Hon. Norman St. George**, as First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the Courts, and Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts Outside of the City of New York in the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.
- **Hon. Adam Silvera** as Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts within the City of New York in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts.
- **Hon. James P. Murphy** as Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts outside the City of New York in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts.
- **Hon. Edwina Richardson** as Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, and Policy and Planning statewide.

## Administrative s Supervising Judges

OCA appoints Administrative Judges and Supervising Judges to oversee the various courts of the state.

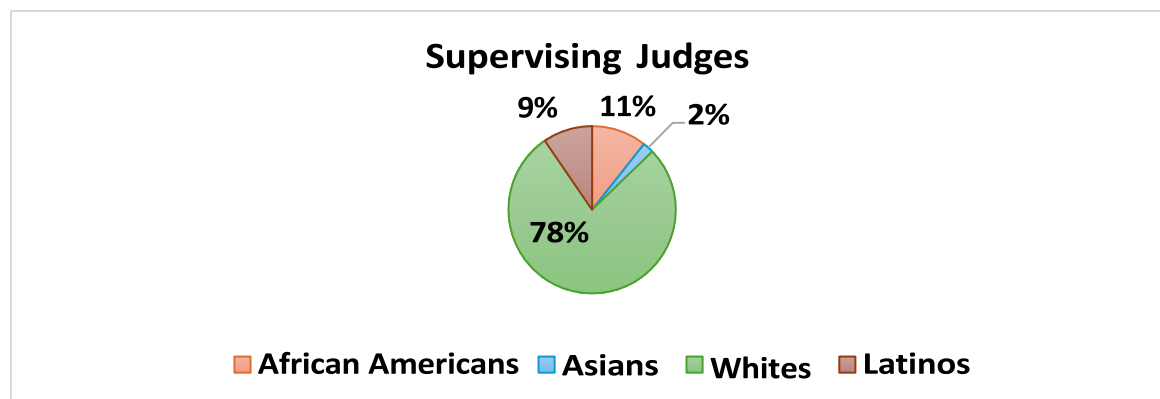
There are currently **twenty-one (21)** Administrative Judges in the state only **two (2)** are Latinos (two males), **seven (7)** are African American (of the seven, one (1) is multi-racial/ethnic - an African American/Latina woman), **ten (10)** are White, and **two (2)** are Asian. In the chart below each are represented in their respective categories.





<b>Judicial District</b>	<b>Name of Judge</b>	<b>Court</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>
<b>First</b>	Suzanne Adams Eileen Biben	Supreme, Civil Term Supreme, Criminal Term	White White
<b>Second</b>	Genine D. Edwards Matthew J. D'Emic	Supreme, Civil Term Supreme, Criminal Term	African American White
<b>Third</b>	Christina Ryba	Administrative Judge	African American
<b>Fourth</b>	Kris Singh	Administrative Judge	Asian
<b>Fifth</b>	Deborah Karalunas	Administrative Judge	White
<b>Sixth</b>	Eugene D. Faughnan	Administrative Judge	White
<b>Seventh</b>	William Taylor	Administrative Judge	White
<b>Eighth</b>	Amy C. Martoche	Administrative Judge	White
<b>Ninth</b>	Anne Minihan	Administrative Judge	White
<b>Tenth</b>	Vito DeStefano Andrew A. Crecca	Nassau County Suffolk County	White White
<b>Eleventh</b>	Marguerite A. Grays <b>Michelle A. Johnson-Bell</b>	Supreme, Civil Term Supreme, Criminal Term	African American African American & Latina
<b>Twelfth</b>	<b>Joseph Capella</b> Alvin Yearwood	Supreme, Civil Term Supreme, Criminal Term	Latino African American
<b>Thirteen</b>	<b>Raymond Rodriguez</b>	Supreme, Civil C Criminal Term	Latino
<b>Criminal Court</b>	Tamiko A. Amaker	Administrative Judge	African American
<b>Civil Court</b>	Shahabuddeen A. Ally	Administrative Judge	Asian
<b>Family Court</b>	Anne-Marie Jolly	Administrative Judge	African American

There are currently **ninety-four (94)** Supervising Judges in the state, only **nine (9)** are Latinos (seven women and two male), **ten (10)** African Americans (six women and four men), and **two (2)** Asian men, the remaining **seventy-three (73)** are White.



<b>Judicial District</b>	<b>Name of Judge</b>	<b>Supervising Judge of</b>	<b>Race/Ethnic breakdown</b>
<b>First</b> <b>Latinos are</b> <b>1 of 4</b>	Leroy Austin D'Souza Kevin B. McGrath, Jr. Karen Lupuloff <b>Francis Ortiz</b>	Civil Court Criminal Court Family Court Housing Court	Asian White White <b>Latina</b>
<b>Second</b> <b>Latinos are</b> <b>2 of 4</b>	<b>Carmen A. Pacheco</b> <b>Keshia Espinal</b> Gilbert Taylor Kevin McClanahan	Civil Court Criminal Court Family Court Housing Court	<b>Latina</b> <b>Latina</b> African American African American
<b>Third</b>  <b>Latinos are</b> <b>0 of 6</b>	Julian Schreiberman Andra Ackerman Keri E. Savona John J. Reilly E. Danielle Jose-Decker  Debra J. Young	Supreme Court County Courts Family Courts City Courts Town & Village Courts Coordinating Judge, Specialty Courts	White White White White White White
<b>Fourth</b>  <b>Latinos are</b> <b>0 of 8</b>	Mary Farley Kelly McKeighan Adam D. Michelini Lisa Lorman Mark Caruso Gary Hobbs Marcia LeMay Timothy Blatchley	Supreme Court County Courts Family Courts City Courts Town & Village Courts (4) regions of district	White White White White White White White
<b>Fifth</b>  <b>Latinos are</b> <b>0 of 13</b>	Danielle M. Fogel Matthew J. Doran Randal B. Caldwell Julie A. Cecile Gregory J. Amoroso James H. Cecile Gerard J. Neri John H. Crandall Karen M. Brandt Brown James P. McClusky Charles C. Merrell  Julie Grow Denton Paul M. Deep	Supreme Court County Courts Family Courts (2)  City Courts (2) & Coordinating Judge of Treatment Courts Town & Village Courts (5) regions of district  Coordinating Judge, Specialty Courts – (2) Foreclosure & Treatment Courts	White White White White White White White White White White White White White White
<b>Sixth</b>  <b>Latinos are</b> <b>0 of 7</b>	Christopher P. Baker Joseph F. Cawley Mary M. Tarantelli John F. Lambert Steven W. Forrest Elizabeth A. Burns Carol A. Cocchiola	Supreme Court County Courts Family Courts DWI / Problem Solving City Courts Town & Village Courts (2) regions of district	White White White White White White White

<b>Seventh</b>  <b>Latinos are 0 of 10</b>  Coordinating Judge, Specialty Courts – (3)	Daniel J. Doyle John B. Gallagher Richard M. Healy Stacey M. Romeo Melissa L. Barrett Michael L. Dollinger Jason L. Cook Christopher S. Ciaccio Vincent M. Dinolfo Fatimat O. Reid <i>Michael L. Dollinger*</i> <i>Christopher S. Ciaccio*</i>	Supreme Court Matrimonial Matters County Courts Family Courts City Courts Town & Village Courts (2) regions of district Surrogate's Courts Problem Solving <i>Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion</i> Pistol Permits	White White White White African American White White White White African American (both already accounted for)
<b>Eighth</b>  <b>Latinos are 1 of 8</b>	John B. Licata Mary L. Slisz Paul Wojtaszek Keith Kibler JaHarr Pridgen M. William Boller James J. Faso, Jr. <b>Betty Calvo-Torres</b>	Supreme Court Matrimonial Matters County Courts Family Courts City Courts Town & Village Courts (3) regions of district & Coordinating Judge of Problem-Solving Courts	White White White White African American White White <b>Latina</b>
<b>Ninth</b>  <b>Latinos are 0 of 8</b>	Nancy Quinn Koba Victor G. Grossman James A. McCarty Joseph A. Egitto Susan M. Capece Joan B. Lefkowitz Loren Williams William J. Giacomo	Supreme Court Matrimonial Matters County Courts Family Courts Problem Solving Courts Fiduciary & Guardianship City Courts Town & Village Courts	White White White White White White African American White
<b>Tenth</b> <b>Nassau</b> <b>County</b> <b>Latinos are 0 of 5</b> ----- <b>Suffolk</b> <b>County</b> <b>Latinos are 1 of 6</b>	Jeffrey Goodstein Teresa Corrigan Ellen R. Greenberg Tricia M. Ferrell <u>Robert G. Bogle</u> Thomas F. Whelan Cheryl A. Joseph Richard Ambro Caren Loguercio <b>Karen Kerr</b> Pierce Fox Cohalan	Supreme Court County Courts Family Courts District Court <u>Village Court</u> Supreme Court Matrimonial Matters County Courts Family Courts District Court Village Court	White White White African American White White African American White White <b>Latina</b> White
<b>Eleventh</b>  <b>Latinos are 2 of 4</b>	Ira R. Greenberg <b>Edwin Novillo</b> <b>Alicea Elloras-Ally</b> John Lansden	Civil Court Criminal Court Family Court Housing Court	White <b>Latino</b> <b>Latina</b> Asian
<b>Twelfth</b>  <b>Latinos are 1 of 4</b>	Taisha Chambers <b>Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor</b> Alison Hamanjian Miriam Brier	Civil Court Criminal Court Family Court Housing Court	African American <b>Latina</b> White White
<b>Thirteen</b>  <b>Latinos are 0 of 3</b>	Robert Helbock Biju J. Koshy Ben Darvil, Jr.	Civil Court Criminal Court Family Court	White Asian African American

<b>Statewide Coordinating Judges</b> <b>Latinos are 1 of 3</b>	Jeffrey Sunshine <b>Richard Rivera</b> Deborah Young	Matrimonial matters Family Court matters Problem-Solving Courts	White <b>Latino</b> White
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## COURT OF APPEALS

For historical context, the Constitutional Convention of 1869 created the Court of Appeals, and the first appeals were argued in July 1870.

The first judge of Hispanic/ Latino heritage ever appointed to the Court was the Hon. Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick. Her nomination and confirmation in 1994, realized one hundred twenty-five (125) years after the courts founding. Since that first appointment New York's highest court has only elevated two other Latino judges. The courts current Latino judges, represent the second and third Latino appointments to the Court in its one hundred fifty-six (156) year history.

The Court of Appeals is made up of seven (7) judges. Presently the court is comprised of:

- Two African American judges – Chief Judge Rowan Wilson & Associate Judge Shirley Troutman
- Two Latino judges - Associate Judge Jenny Rivera & Associate Judge Michael J. Garcia
- Three White judges - Associate Judge Anthony Cannataro, Associate Judge Madeline Singas & Associate Judge Caitlin J. Halligan

## APPELLATE DIVISION

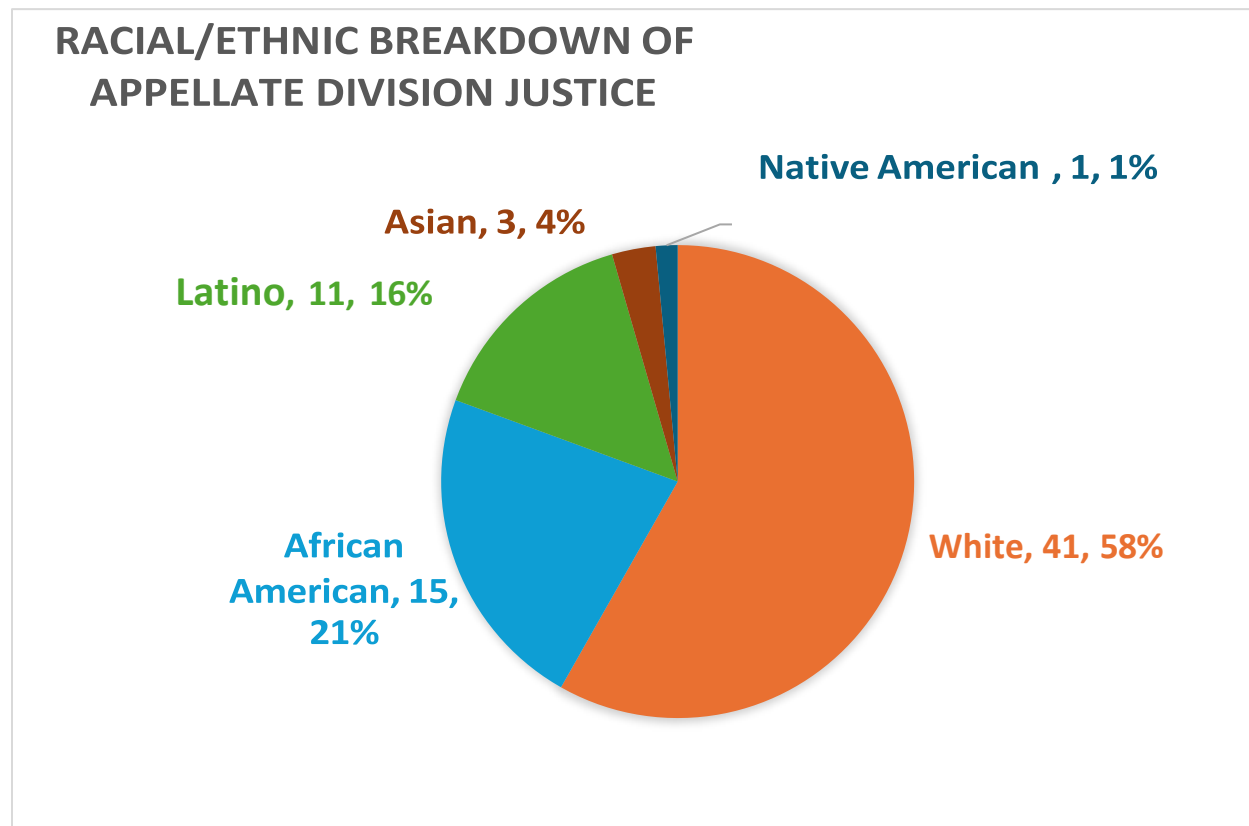
The Appellate Division was created by the NYS Constitution of 1894 and was effective as of January 1, 1896. The Appellate Division, the intermediate appellate court in New York State, hears appeals from the Supreme, Family, County & Surrogate Courts, the Court of Claims, referrals from the Appellate Term and administrative appeals. For most litigants seeking to appeal an adverse ruling, the Appellate Division is the court of last resort.

Our journey through our intermediate appellate courts, known as the Appellate Division and the Appellate Term, have similarly been plagued by the same lack of representation.

In the 129-year history of the Appellate Division only **eighteen (18)** Latino Justices have been appointed to this Court, **ten (10)** in the First Department and **seven (7)** in the Second Department and **one (1)** in the Third Dept - this appointment in 2023, represented the first Latino Justice ever appointed to that Judicial Department. ***The Fourth Department has yet to appoint any Latinos to their ranks as there are no Supreme Court Justices of Latino descent elected or supported for nomination in the region.***

There are currently **seventy-one (71)** Appellate Division Justices amongst the four Judicial Departments. *Of the **sixty-seven (67)** Appellate Division Justices in NYS: forty-one (41) are white or 58 %; fifteen (15) are African American or 21%; ten (11) are Latino or 16 %; three (3) are Asians or 4% and one (1) is Native American or 1%- of the overall number of associate justices.*

The Appellate Divisions are led by two **(2)** White, one **(1)** African American and one **(1)** Latino Presiding Justice.



See chart below for full breakdown and details of the members of the NYS Appellate Divisions.

Dept	White	Black	Latino	Asian	Other
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>  <b>21</b> <b>Justices</b>	<b>9</b> Cynthia Kern Peter H. Moulton David Friedman Barbara R. Kapnick Ellen Gesmer Saliann Scarpulla Marty Shulman John R. Higgitt Kelly Levy O'Neill Shlomo Hagler	<b>5</b> <b>PJ Dianne Renwick</b> Troy K. Webber Tanya R. Kennedy Bahaati Pitt-Burke Marsha D. Michael	<b>5</b> Sallie Manzanet-Daniels Lizbeth Gonzalez Manuel J. Mendez Julio Rodriguez, III Llinét M. Rosado	<b>0</b> <b>Margret Chan,</b>  <b>In 2025, 1<sup>st</sup> Asian woman to the AD1.</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>  <b>27</b> <b>Justices</b>	<b>12</b> Mark C. Dillon Collen Duffy Francesca E. Connolly Angela G. Iannacci Robert J. Miller Lara J. Genovesi Linda Christopher Barry E. Warhit James P. McCormack Laurence L. Love Carl J. Landicino Donna Marie E. Golia Susan Quirk	<b>6</b> Valerie Brathwaite-Nelson Cheryl E. Chambers Deborah A. Dowling Paul Wooten William G. Ford Janice Taylor	<b>4</b> <b>PJ Hector D. LaSalle</b> Betsy Barros Helen Voutsinas Lourdes M. Ventura Elena Goldberg-Velazquez	<b>2</b> Lillian Wan Philip Hom	<b>0</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>  <b>12</b> <b>Justices</b>	<b>9</b> <b>PJ Elizabeth Garry</b> John C. Egan, Jr. Christine M. Clark Stan L. Pritzker Michael C. Lynch Molly Reynolds Fitzgerald Andrew G. Ceresia Lisa M. Fisher J. Michael Mackey	<b>2</b> Sharon A. M. Aarons Eddie J. McShan  Note: <i>*Both Justices were elected out of Bronx County in the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, First Judicial Dept.</i>	<b>1</b> Mark L. Powers  <i>*In 2023 Justice Powers became the First Latino ever appointed to this court.</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>  <b>12</b> <b>Justices</b>	<b>9</b> <b>PJ Gerald J. Whalen</b> Stephen K. Lindley John M. Curran Tracey A. Bannister Nancy E. Smith Donald A. Greenwood Henry J. Nowak Scott DelConte Lynn W. Keane	<b>2</b> Craig D. Hannah E. Jeanette Ogden	<b>0</b> <i>*This Court has never had a Latino/a appointed to it, as the Judicial Districts have NEVER NOMINATED OR ELECTED A LATINO to the NYS Supreme Court.</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> Mark A. Montour <i>(1<sup>st</sup> Native American ever appointed to any appellate division - 2022).</i>

Amongst the current justices sitting on the Appellate Division, several represented the first ever Latino or Latina's in their respective Courts despite the Appellate Courts creation in 1894. The history of New York's Appellate Courts is preserved in the Latino Judges Association "*The History Project – A documentary film chronicling the history of Latino Judges in New York State*".<sup>11</sup>

For a ten-year period following my own elevation in October 2009, as the first Latina ever appointed to any Appellate Division, the Latino community obtained only two additional Latina Justices spread out over 5-year increments. The first Latina to the Second Department was appointed in 2014, the Hon. Betsy Barros, followed five years later by the Hon. Lizbeth Gonzalez to the First Dept. in 2019. Similar lags, likewise, exist in the appointment of Latino men to the Appellate Division, see below chart.

<b>AD1 Latino Justices:</b>			
Emilio Nunez <i>1<sup>st</sup> Latino to any division</i>	1969-1977	Sallie Manzanet-Daniels <i>1<sup>st</sup> Latina (P.R.) to any division</i>	2009 - present
John Carro	1979-1994	Lizbeth Gonzalez	2019 - present
Luis A. Gonzalez <i>1<sup>st</sup> Latino PJ to any division</i>	2002-2015	Manny J. Mendez	2020 - present
Rolando T. Acosta <i>1<sup>st</sup> Dominican PJ</i>	2008 - 2023	Julio Rodriguez, III	2021 - present
Nelson S. Roman (now SDNY – District Court)	2009 - 2013	Llínét M. Rosado <i>1<sup>st</sup> Dominican woman to AD1</i>	2023 - present

<b>AD2 Latino Justices:</b>			
Reinaldo Rivera <i>1<sup>st</sup> Latino to AD2</i>	2002 - 2024	Joseph Zayas ( <i>now CAJ</i> )	2021 - 2023
Ariel Belen	2008 - 2012	Helen Voutsinas <i>1<sup>st</sup> Latina of Dominican descent (9<sup>th</sup> &amp; 10<sup>th</sup> JD)</i>	2022 - present
Hector D. LaSalle <i>1<sup>st</sup> Latino PJ to 2nd Dept.</i>	2014 - present	Lourdes M. Ventura <i>1<sup>st</sup> Dominican (2<sup>nd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> &amp; 13<sup>th</sup> JD)</i>	2023 - present
Betsy Barros <i>1<sup>st</sup> Latina (Chilean) to AD2</i>	2014 - present	Elena Goldberg-Velazquez <i>1<sup>st</sup> Puerto Rican woman (9<sup>th</sup> JD)</i>	2025

Of greater concern is the absolute lack of representation in the Fourth Department. As there is currently no elected Supreme Court Justices of Latino descent in that region of

<sup>11</sup> <https://latinojudgesassociation.org/ljahistoryproject/>



the state, there are no candidates in the pipeline. This is so, despite having an eligible Latina judge in the region, the Hon. Betty Calvo-Torres, who was appointed to the Court of Claims by Governor Kathy Hochul in 2022 after languishing in her Mayor appointed, and then elected role, as City Court Judge in Buffalo for over fifteen (15) years.

The Third Department suffers from the same impediments. There are likewise no Latinas, eligible for appointment to the Third Department. In 2023, the region gained a third Latino Supreme Court Justice with the election of the Hon. Richard Rivera, who had served in the Family Court for nine (9) years before his nomination. We have Latino members in these jurisdictions despite years on the City Court, like the Hon. Michael Lopez elected in 2018, that have been unable to garner the needed support of the majority to advance. Traditional avenues to the bench, like serving as a Family Court Support Magistrate, like Maritza Buitrago in the Monroe Family Court out of the Seventh Judicial District, have likewise not yielded support for judicial nominations to that court.

The inability of qualified Latina/o candidates to get the support and backing to run for Supreme Court in those judicial departments ensures that our community will never have an opportunity for representation on the Appellate Courts of the western and northern regions of our state.

## APPELLATE TERM

The Appellate Term was established in 1968 and is the intermediate appellate court that hears appeals from the lower courts. Specifically, the Civil and Criminal Courts of the City of New York, Housing Court and in specific judicial districts - City, District, Town and Village and some County Courts.

In the Appellate Terms history, a total of **twelve (12)** Latino Justices have been appointed to that court, **five (5)** in the First Dept. and **seven (7)** in the Second Dept. Of those, only **six (6)** were later elevated to the Appellate Division, two in the first, and three in the second department.

AD1 Latino Justices:		AD2 Latino Justices	
Luis A. Gonzalez (named AJ of 12 <sup>th</sup> J.D.)	1996 -1998	<i>Jaime Rios</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> Latino PJ to App. Term	2001 – 2013
Lucindo Suarez 1 <sup>st</sup> Latino PJ to App. Term	2000 -2006 2002	Ariel Belen	2005 - 2008
Lizbeth Gonzalez	2016 - 2019	Hector D. LaSalle	2012 - 2014
Maryann Brigantti	2021 - present	Helen Voutsinas	2021-2022
Bianka Perez	2023 - present	Lourdes M. Ventura	2023
		Elena Goldberg-Velazquez	2024 - 2025
		Joanne D, Quiñones	2024 - present



Currently, of the **sixteen (16)** Appellate Term Judges, eight (8) are White, four (4) are African American and four (4) are Latino. The Appellate Term courts are led by two (2) white Presiding Justices and one (1) African American. With recent elevations there are now **fourteen (14)** Appellate Term Judges (seven (7) whites and three (3) Latinos.

Dept.	White	Black	Latino	Asian	Other
1 <sup>st</sup> [1 <sup>st</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> JD's]	<b>2 (*1)</b> <b>*PJ Shlomo Hagler</b> Alexander M. Tisch	<b>1</b> Ta-Tanisha James	<b>2</b> Mary Ann Brigantti Bianka Perez	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> [2 <sup>nd</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> JD's]	<b>1</b> Marina Cora Mundy	<b>3</b> <b>PJ Wavny Toussaint</b> Cheree Buggs Lisa S. Ottley	<b>1</b> Joanne D. Quiñones	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> [9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> JD's]	<b>4</b> <b>PJ Jerry Garguilo</b> Timothy Driscoll Gretchen Walsh Joseph R. Conway	<b>0</b>	<b>1 (*0)</b> *Elena Goldberg- Velazquez	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**\*Note:** *PJ Shlomo Hagler and Justice Elena Goldberg-Velasquez were elevated to the Appellate Division by Governor Kathy Hochul on July 24, 2025.*

## Our Trial Courts:

New York State courts system is comprised of a variety of different trial level courts.<sup>12</sup> The following explores each distinct category, the regional differences throughout the state and observations concerning the impediments to growth for Latino judicial candidates.

## Supreme Court

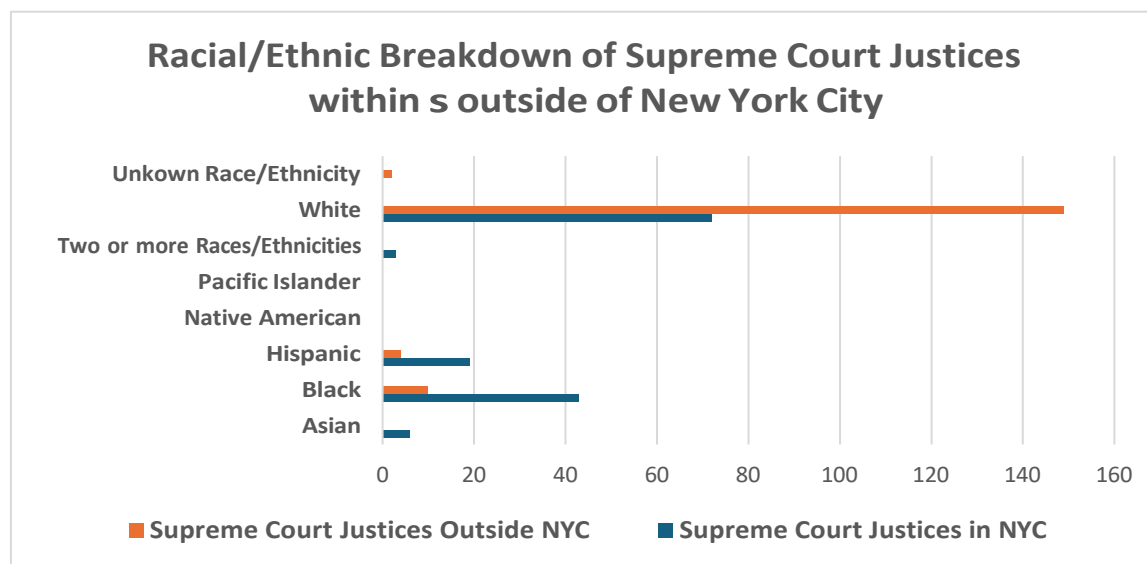
Amongst one of the oldest courts of general jurisdiction in the nation, the New York States's Supreme Court, has undergone a multitude of changes, constitutional and otherwise, since it was established in 1691. For our purposes, the Constitutional Amendments of 1846, were enacted to modernize the court system and upon whose foundation, and subsequent amendments, we operate within today.

Supreme Court is the state-wide trial court with the broadest jurisdiction in both civil and criminal (felony) matters. However, it generally hears matters that are outside the jurisdiction of other trial courts of more limited jurisdiction. Supreme Court Justices are elected and serve a 14-year term.

<sup>12</sup> <https://nycourts.gov/courts/cts-NYC.shtml>

## Within New York City:

According to OCA stats there are presently **143** elected Supreme Court Justices within New York City. See below charts for OCA breakdown. <sup>13</sup>



**\*Note:** OCA's stats breakdown this category by assignment/status. See following chart for full breakdown.

OCA stats reveal the following Racial/Ethnic breakdown of the approximately **452** total Supreme Court Justices.

	Court of Appeals (elected Justices) (2)	Appellate Division Justices (67)	Supreme Court Justices in NYC (143)	Supreme Court Justices Outside NYC (165)	Certified Justices (75)	TOTAL 452	% of Court	% of NYS Population
Asian	0	2	6	0	0	8	1.77	9%
Black	1	15	43	10	12	81	17.92	13%
Hispanic (Latino) Figures represent LJA data	0	8 (LJA – 10)	19 (LJA – 27) (with AD 36)	4 (LJA = 5) (with AD 6)	8 (LJA = 3)	39 (LJA = 45)	9.07 (9.96%)	20%
White	1	39	72	149	55	251	55.53	53%

<sup>13</sup> New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Judicial Demographic Information, January 2025.

Native American	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.22	0%
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Two or more Races/ Ethnicities	0	0	3	0	0	3	0.66	4%
Unknown Race/ Ethnicity	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.44	1%

A more granular review of the Supreme Court trends as it relates to Latino representation, reveals some disturbing facts. Notwithstanding the fact that Latinos occupy a significant percentage of the state-wide population (approximately 20%) and of the NYC population (approximately 28.4%),<sup>14</sup> we continue to lag in representation.

## First Department

Most surprisingly, is the fact that while the First Department has **nineteen (19)** elected Supreme Court Justices of Latino descent (twelve [12] women and seven [7] men), the overwhelming majority, **seventeen (17)**, were elected from ***Bronx County in the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District***. As a result, all but one of the Latino First Department, Appellate Division Justices are likewise elected from the Bronx. Indeed, as one of its members, I proudly highlight that the Bronx's 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, holds the distinction as the county with the greatest number of Latino elected judges in the state. The county is home to 1.3 million residents, 54.9% of which are of Latino heritage.<sup>15</sup> The Justices include (and are listed alphabetically) Maryann Brigantti, Joseph Capella, Fidel Gomez, Doris Gonzalez, Lizbeth Gonzalez, Patsy Gouldborne, Wilma Guzman, John Howard-Algarin, Sallie Manzanet-Daniels, Connie Morales, Bianka Perez, Julio Rodriguez, III, Llínét Rosado, Myrna Socorro, Marissa Soto, Fernando Tapia and George Villegas.

While its counterpart, **New York County in the 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District**, only has **two (2)** elected Supreme Court Justices of Latino descent. Those Justices, Manuel J. Mendez elected in 2012 (now sitting in the Appellate Division, First Dept.) and Mary Rosado elected in 2018 (currently a certificated Justice), represent the last two Latino Justices nominated and elected out of Manhattan. This glaring lack of representation in a county with over 1.6 million residents, and an estimated Latino population of 24.6%

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2023). American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter profile page for New York <<http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US36-new-york/>>

<sup>15</sup> [Bronx County Demographics | Current New York Census Data](#)

<sup>16</sup> is nothing short of appalling. There can be no justification why the last Latino candidate was elected **13 years ago** and the last Latina candidate, **7 years ago**. Unlike, the upper regions of our state where the Latino population is a mere fraction of New York County, and where there are little, or no, Latino judges in the pipeline– the same cannot be said for Manhattan. A more detailed discussion about the available Latino talent on the bench in Civil, Criminal and Family Courts in New York City will be explored below.

## Second Department

The **Second Judicial District, Kings County**, has **nine (9)** elected Supreme Court Justices of Latino descent (six [6] women and three [3] men) in a county with over 2.5 million people and an 18.9 % Latino population.<sup>17</sup> The Justices include (and are listed alphabetically) Betsy Barros, Lizette Cólón, Patria Frias-Cólón, Evelyn LaPorte, Connie Mallafré Mélendez, Joanne D. Quiñones, Francois Rivera, Christopher Robles and Richard Velasquez.

The **Eleventh Judicial District, Queens County**, has **eight (8)** elected Supreme Court Justices of Latino descent (six [6] women and two [2] men) in a county with over 2.2 million people and a 27.9% Latino population.<sup>18</sup> The Justices include (and are listed alphabetically) Karina Alomar, Nestor Diaz, Michelle Johnson-Bell, Lumarie Maldonado-Cruz, Sandra Muñoz, Carmen Velasquez, Lourdes M. Ventura and our CAJ Joseph Zayas.

The **Thirteenth Judicial District, Richmond County** (otherwise known as Staten Island), has NEVER elected a Supreme Court Justice of Latino heritage in the history of the county. *Richmond County is home to approximately 490,000 New Yorkers, 19.5 % of whom are of Latino descent.*<sup>19</sup> In New York City, Richmond County holds the distinction for the most abysmal record for the diversification of the judiciary. Demonstrating, in no uncertain terms, the County leadership's complete lack of commitment to ensuring a measure of representation for its own Latino citizenry.

In 2022, in an effort to address this lack of representation, OCA assigned Justice Lisette Colon, an elected Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice, out of borough to the Staten Island Supreme Court. Thereafter, and much to their credit, the Chief Administrative Judge Joseph Zayas made the historic appointment of the Hon. Raymond Rodriguez, as the Administrative Judge for the Civil and Criminal Terms of Supreme Court in the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. The appointment represented the first time a Latino has ever served in

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<sup>16</sup> [Race, Diversity, and Ethnicity in Manhattan, NY | BestNeighborhood.org](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Kings County Demographics | Current New York Census Data](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Queens County Demographics | Current New York Census Data](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Richmond County Demographics | Current New York Census Data](#)

that capacity and is especially meaningful to the Latino community which has never had one of its own nominated or elected to the Supreme Court in the history of the county.

The below chart illustrates Latino judicial representation within New York City.

	<i><b>Supreme Ct. Civil Term</b></i>	<i><b>Supreme Ct. Criminal Term</b></i>	<i><b>Civil Court</b></i>	<i><b>Criminal Court</b></i>	<i><b>ASCJ (Acting Supreme Court Justice)</b></i>
<b><i>New York</i></b>	5 of 60	6 of 33	2 of 10	2 of 18	7 of 38
<b><i>Bronx</i></b>	12 of 29	5 of 28	4 of 11	2 of 18	10 of 57
<b><i>Kings</i></b>	4 of 39	3 of 35	2 of 15	2 of 17	3 of 36
<b><i>Queens</i></b>	4 of 37	4 of 27	2 of 11	5 of 14	4 of 24
<b><i>Richmond</i></b>	(combined)	2 of 14)	0 of 3	0 of 3	1 of 11
	<b>25 of 165= 15.15%</b>	<b>20 of 137= 27.4%</b>	<b>10 of 50= 20%</b>	<b>11 of 70= 15.71%</b>	<b>25 of 166= 15.06%</b>

Throughout the city, there are **sixty-two (62)** Acting Family Court Judges of those **six (6)** are Latino or **9.68%**.

## Tenth Judicial District

### Suffolk County

The **Tenth Judicial District, Suffolk County**, has **one (1)** elected Supreme Court Justice of Latino descent, the Hon. Hector D. LaSalle in a county with over 1.5 million people and a Latino population of 22.2%.<sup>20</sup>

### Nassau County

The **Tenth Judicial District, Nassau County**, has **one (1)** elected Supreme Court Justice of Latino descent, the Hon. Helen Voutsinas in a county with over 1.381 million people and a Latino population of 18.5%.<sup>21</sup>

It is noteworthy that the only two elected Supreme Court Justices from this district are both appointed to the Appellate Division, Second Department, thus there are no elected Latino Supreme Court Justices sitting in all Long Island.

<sup>20</sup> [Suffolk County Demographics | Current New York Census Data](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Nassau County | Current New York Census Data](#)

The chart below illustrates the racial/ethnic judicial representation in the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.<sup>22</sup>

10 <sup>th</sup> Judicial District	<i>Nassau</i> (69)	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Suffolk</i> (63)	<i>Percentage</i>
Black/African American	4	6%	6	10%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>
Asian	1	1%	1	2%
<b>White</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>68%</b>
Unknown/prefer not to answer	16	23%	10	16%

## Ninth Judicial District

The **Ninth Judicial District**, is comprised of five counties: Dutchess (297,150), Orange (407,470), Putnam (98,060), Rockland (340,807) and Westchester (990,817).<sup>23</sup> The district has a total of **four (4)** elected Supreme Court Justices of Latino descent, in a county with approximately 2.1 million people.<sup>24</sup> The Justices include (and are listed alphabetically) Elena Goldberg-Velazquez, James Hyer, Thomas Quiñones (all elected in Westchester County, which has a Latino population of 27%) and Maria Vasquez-Doles (the first Latina elected in the district, in Orange County).

The lack of steady growth in the number of Latino Supreme Court Justices is creating a shortage in the pipeline of eligible candidates in these heavily populated Hispanic judicial districts within the New York City region of the First and Second Judicial Departments. Hence immediate attention is required to address this severe shortage and a genuine commitment to diversify the New York City ranks on the Supreme Court, rather than the usual lip service that has been paid year after year.

The below chart illustrates the racial/ethnic breakdown of Judicial representation in the 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.<sup>25</sup>

9 <sup>th</sup> Judicial District	(92)	<i>Percentage</i>
Black/African American	15	16%
Hispanic/Latino	6	7%
Asian	0	0%
White	57	62%
Unknown/prefer not to answer	14	15%

<sup>22</sup> NYS Unified Court System: Division of Technology C Court Research, ONYC, Self-Reported Judicial Demographics 2020-2024 Survey Year

<sup>23</sup> Add citation for 9<sup>th</sup> JD census

<sup>24</sup> [Nassau County Demographics | Current New York Census Data](#)

<sup>25</sup> NYS Unified Court System: Division of Technology & Court Research, ONYC, Self-Reported Judicial Demographics 2020-2024 Survey Year

## Outside New York City:

According to OCA stats, there are presently **165** elected Supreme Court Justices outside New York City. As reflected in the chart above

## Third Department

The Third Department is comprised of three (3) Judicial Districts – the Third, Fourth & Sixth and amongst them 28 counties. Currently there are no Latina women elected to the Supreme Court, and only **three (3)** Latino men. Justices Michael Cuevas and Mark Powers (currently serving on the AD3), (Schenectady) and Justice Richard Rivera elected from the Third Judicial District (Albany).

## Fourth Department

The Fourth Department is comprised of three (**3**) Judicial Districts – the Fifth, Seventh & Eighth and amongst them 22 counties. Currently there are no Latina women or Latino men elected to the Supreme Court. Thus, no pipeline for Latinos has been created or supported for the Supreme Court by the leadership of the region. As previously mentioned, the sole Latina judge in the entire Fourth Department is the Hon. Betty Calvo Torres. Judge Calvo-Torres was appointed to the Court of Claims by Governor Kathy Hochul in 2022 after languishing in her Mayor appointed (and later elected) role as City Court Judge in Buffalo for over fifteen (15) years. Since her appointment, OCA has recognized her incredible talent and appointed her as both Supervising Judge of the Town and Village Courts in Wyoming and Genesee Counties and the Coordinating Judge of the Problem-Solving Courts in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. Notwithstanding her successes and residing in Buffalo with a Latino population of ten (10) percent, support for the Supreme Court has remained elusive. Hence, we must ask “Is the Latino community of Erie County less deserving of representation than all other communities?” To date the answer is a deafening “YES’.

The below chart illustrates the racial/ethnic breakdown of Judicial representation in the Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) through Eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) Judicial Districts.<sup>26</sup>

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District</b>		<b>56</b>	<i>Percentage</i>
	Black/African American	3	5%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>1</b>	1%
	Asian	1	1%
	White	46	82%
	Unknown/prefer not to answer	6	11%

<sup>26</sup> NYS Unified Court System: Division of Technology & Court Research, ONYC, Self-Reported Judicial Demographics 2020-2024 Survey Year

<b>4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District</b>		<b>59</b>	<i>Percentage</i>
	Black/African American	2	3%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>
	Asian	1	2%
	White	47	80%
	Unknown/prefer not to answer	7	12%
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District</b>		<b>54</b>	<i>Percentage</i>
	Black/African American	3	6%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
	Asian	0	0%
	White	42	62%
	Unknown/prefer not to answer/ Not listed race	9	15%
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District</b>		<b>38</b>	<i>Percentage</i>
	Black/African American	1	2%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
	Asian	0	0%
	White	33	85%
	Unknown/prefer not to answer	5	13%
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District</b>		<b>48</b>	<i>Percentage</i>
	Black/African American	5	10%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Asian	1	2%
	White	30	63%
	Unknown/prefer not to answer/ Not listed race	10	21%
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District</b>		<b>82</b>	<i>Percentage</i>
	Black/African American	13	16%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
	Asian	0	0%
	American Indian/Alaskan	1	1%
	White	57	70%
	Unknown/prefer not to answer	10	12%

## Surrogates Court

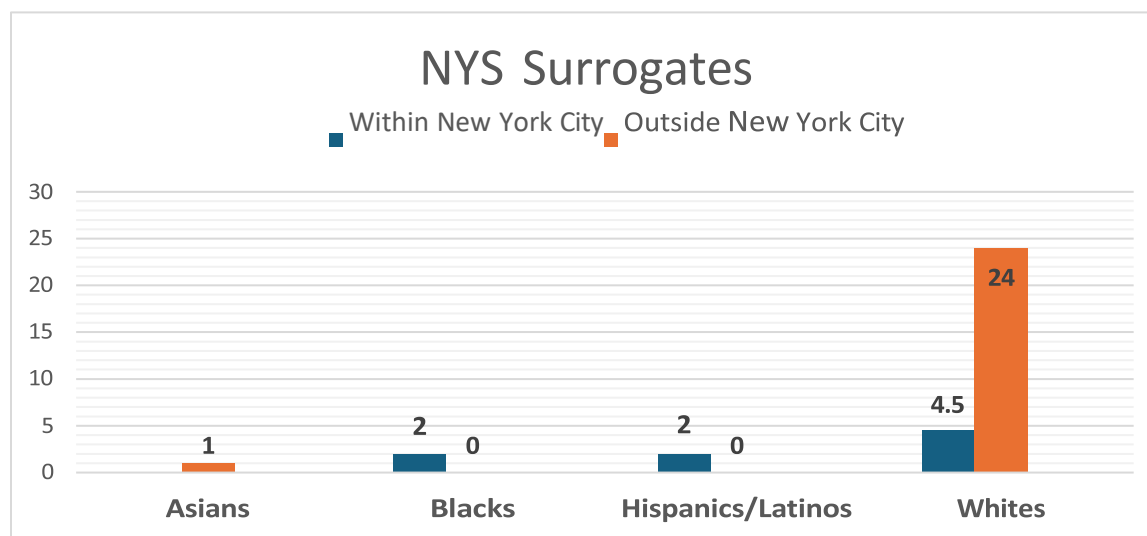
There is a Surrogates Court in every county in NYS and it hears cases involving the affairs of decedents, including the probate of wills and the administration of estates. The court, depending on the jurisdiction, also handles matters relating to guardianships, and together with the Family Court may preside over adoptions. Surrogate's Court Judges are elected for 10-year terms.

There are a total of **32** Surrogates throughout the state, **seven (7)** within New York City and **twenty-five (25)** outside of NYC. Of the seven **(7)** New York City Surrogates,



**four (4)** are White, **one (1)** is Black and **two (2)** are Latina women, Judge Rita Mella (New York County) and Judge Nelida Malave-Gonzalez (Bronx County).

Of the **twenty-five (25)** Surrogates outside the city, **one (1)** is Asian and **twenty-four (24)** are White.



## Court of Claims

The Court of Claims is a state-wide court having exclusive jurisdiction over claims of monetary damages against the State and various other State-related entities (i.e., the City University of New York, the NYS Thruway Authority & the Power Authority, to name a few). The Court of Claims, however, has no jurisdiction over any city, county or town government, or over any individual defendant.

Judges in the Court of Claims are appointed by the governor, and confirmed by the Senate, for a 9-year term (unless appointed to fill an interim vacancy, in which case the term expires upon the completion of the original 9-year appointment).

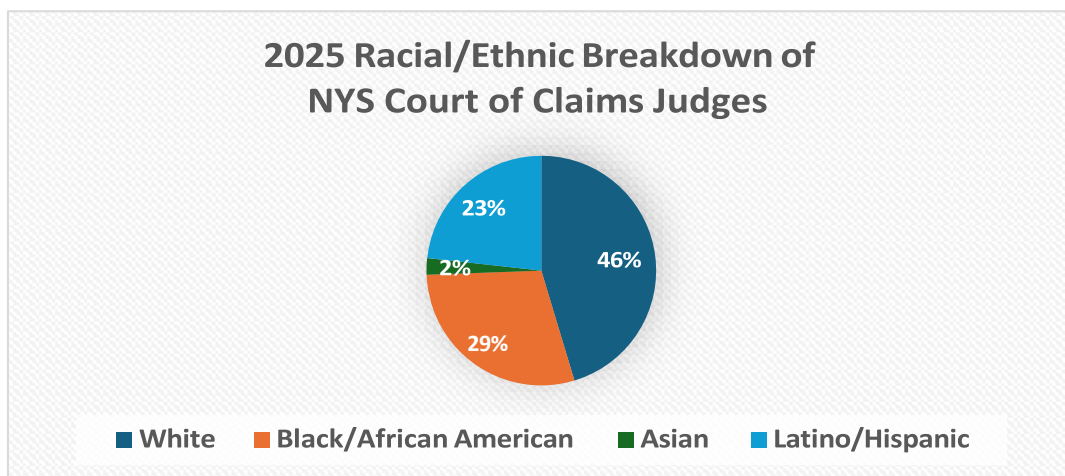
The Court of Claims is made up of **eighty-six (86)** judges. Those Court of Claims Judges assigned to handle matters against the state are known as “Part A” Judges, while others are designated “Acting Supreme Court Justices (ASCJ)” by OCA and are assigned to either Criminal or Civil Term in Supreme Courts throughout the state.

Currently, there are **eighty-four (84)** Court of Claims judges in NYS, amongst them there are **nineteen (19)** of Latino descent throughout the state, representing **22.62%** of the court. That is a marked improvement in representation since the first iteration of

this report in 2020, when *Latino’s only held seven (7) of the eight-four (84) sitting Court of Claims judges or a mere 8.33%.* <sup>27</sup>

The following chart contains the current list of Latino Court of Claims Judges in New York State and their year of appointment.

Francisco Calderon	’24	Ramón E. Rivera	’21
Betty Calvo-Torres	’22	Jeanette Rodriguez-Morick	’15
Fernando Camacho	’08	Veronica Romero-Guerrero	’24
Gregory Carro	’02	Carmen St. George	’17
Aletha V. Fields	’23	Rhonda Tomlinson	’21
Raymond Fernandez	’23	Damaris Torrent	’21
Alicia Gerez	’21	Javier E. Vargas	’22
Linda Mejias-Glover	’21	Natacha Carbajal Evangelista	’25
Juan Merchan	’09	Noel Mendez	’25
Gary F. Miret	’21		



The commitment to diversifying the bench has not been felt more in the last five years, than in the ranks of the Court of Claims. Our representation has increased and **eleven (11)** of those additions have been garnered since the ascension of Governor Kathy Hochul in August of 2021. Four of those appointments were of historic “firsts” to our community in the appointment of Justices to the Appellate Division in the First, Second and Third Departments. In addition, Governor Hochul appointed seven additional judges to the Court of Claims throughout the state. A full list of her appointments and re-appointments follows below.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> <https://latinojudgesassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/overview-of-latino-judges-2020-updated-with-preamble.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> [Governor Hochul Announces Appointments to the New York State Court of Claims, Supreme Court and Family Court | Governor Kathy Hochul](#)

## Latino Judicial Appointments by Governor Kathy Hochul

### Appellate Division:

First Department	Second Department	Third Department
Sallie Manzanet-Daniels * '21	Hector D. LaSalle * '24	Mark Powers '23
Lizbeth Gonzalez '21	Helen Voutsinas '22	
Llinét M. Rosado '23	Lourdes M. Ventura '23	
	Elena Goldberg-Velazquez '25	

\* Reappointed by GKH

### Court of Claims:

Javier Vargas '22	Veronica Romero Guerrero '24
Betty Calvo-Torres '22	Francisco Calderon '24
Raymond Fernandez '23	Natacha Carabajal Evangelista '25
Joanne D. Quiñones '22	Noel Mendez '25
Aletha Fields '23	

### Interim Court Appointments:

Maria Cubillos Reed '23	Family Court
Walter Rivera '25	Supreme Court

## The Latino Legal Communities Missed Opportunity: Gov. Kathy Hochul's historic nomination of first candidate of color for NYS Chief Judge – Hon. Hector D. LaSalle

On December 22, 2021, the Latino community celebrated the historic nomination by Governor Kathy Hochul of the first candidate of color for New York State Chief Judge, the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department, the Hon. Hector D. LaSalle.<sup>29</sup>

Following Gov. Hochul's historic nomination the Latino community witnessed the systematic and organized manipulation of the normal process of review for the position of Chief Judge of the State of New York. The New York State Senate, under the leadership of Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, added four additional members to the Judiciary Committee (from 15 to 19), one Republican and three democrats, two of which had already prejudged and publicly declared their opposition to Justice LaSalle's nomination, like State Senator Jessica Ramos.<sup>30</sup> Indeed his nomination was met with

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.nys.gov>

<sup>30</sup> [NY Democrats expand committee before Hector LaSalle hearing votes](#)

opposition from the progressive wing of the Democratic Party which quickly labeled him a “centrist” and distorted his judicial record.

Presiding Justice Hector D. LaSalle testified on January 18, 2023, for over five (5) hours of uninterrupted questioning. No other candidate, in the history of confirmation hearings in NYS has ever testified as long (even if you combined the questioning time of the last five chief justices nominated and confirmed by the Senate). Notwithstanding Justice LaSalle’s exceptional, learned, eloquent, measured and perfectly tempered responses to the well-orchestrated hearing, the newly constituted and stacked committee, without deliberation, declined to vote in favor and recommend the first Latino candidate for Chief Judge for confirmation.<sup>31</sup> In a vote of 10 to 9, only Democratic Senator Luis Sepulveda of the Bronx and Senator Kevin Thomas of Long Island voted yes.

After the vote, attempts by Republican members to call for a vote to send the matter to the Senate floor for a full vote by the Senate as mandated by the NYS Constitution was shut down by Judiciary Committee Chair, Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, without the taking of a vote on the question. The LJA, together with other affinity Latino Bar Associations, in the face of the unprecedented attacks and mischaracterizations of PJ LaSalle’s legal record, called upon on NYS Senate and the Senate Judiciary Committee to give the judge a full and fair hearing before the entire Senate as mandated by our State Constitution. We insisted that Justice LaSalle is entitled to the same due process that every other nominee before him had been afforded.

Following the hearing, the Senate GOP filed a lawsuit to force a vote on the Senate floor or Gov. Hochul’s Chief Judge nominee.<sup>32</sup> In response, on Wednesday, February 15, 2023, New York Democrats led by Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins called for an unexpected vote rejecting Presiding Justice LaSalle’s nomination for NYS Chief Judge. The unexpected vote deprived him and the Latino community the decency and respect of sufficient time to gather and sit alongside him in the gallery for the vote, in the same way we appeared in mass for the hearing.

Shortly thereafter, Justice Whelan, ruled in favor of GOP Senator and wrote, in a nine-page decision, “This Court must conclude that the practice adopted by the defendants is not allowed under the Constitution. The judiciary committee does not have the constitutional duty for ‘advice and consent.’ The Constitution clearly states that this power is reserved to the Senate. The judiciary committee can aid the full Senate by

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<sup>31</sup> See January 18, 2023 - NYS Senate Judiciary Hearing on the nomination of Hon. Hector D. LaSalle <https://youtube.com/watch?v=ILs6r7bvOtE&si=DxsXMTnjNPD-eNqt>

<sup>32</sup> [State Senate GOP sues to force vote on LaSalle nomination](#)

performing its investigative function, but it cannot substitute for the power reserved to the Senate by the Constitution.”<sup>33</sup>

The Latino community has once again been deprived of a transformational opportunity to be a vested participant in the leadership of this state and this vital third branch of government, but we are eternally grateful to Governor Hochul for seeing our community and our individual and collective worth.

## Family Court

The Family Court considers matters involving children and families. The court’s jurisdiction includes custody and visitation, support, family offense (domestic violence), person-in-need of supervision (PINS), delinquency, child protective proceedings (abuse and neglect), foster care approval and review, termination of parental rights, adoption and guardianship.<sup>34</sup>

In New York City, Family Court Judges are appointed by the mayor.<sup>35</sup> Currently there are **sixty-seven (67)** appointed NYC Family Court Judges.

Outside of New York City, Family Court judges are elected by the constituents of the counties where they reside for a term of ten years. Currently there are **one-hundred seventeen (117)** Family Court judges outside of NYC. See chart below for Racial/Ethnic Breakdown of the Family Court in NYS.<sup>36</sup>

	Appointed NYC Family Court Judge (67)	% of Total	Elected Family Court Judge Outside NYC (117)	% of Total
Asian	6	8.95%	0	0
Black/African American	14	20.90%	12	10.26%
Hispanic/Latino <i>represent LJA stats</i>	5 [LJA – 7]	7.46% [10.45%]	7 [LJA – 6]	5.98% [5.13%]
White	36	53.73%	92	78.63%
Native American	0	0	0	0
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Two or more Races/Ethnicities	2	2.99%	0	0
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	4	5.97%	6	5.13%

<sup>33</sup> <https://reportwire.org/l-i-judge-says-senate-dems-wrong-to-deny-lasalle-floor-vote-must-hold-one-for-next-chief-judge-nominee/> and [Suffolk Judge Says Democrats' Delay in Voting on LaSalle Was Unconstitutional | Law.com](#)

<sup>34</sup> <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/courts/8jd/structure.shtml>

<sup>35</sup> [NY Const art VI § 13](#)

<sup>36</sup> New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Judicial Demographic Information, January 2025.

### The Latino Family Court Justices in NYC:

New York County 1 <sup>st</sup> JD	Maria Arias
Bronx County 12 <sup>th</sup> JD	Janette Cortes-Gomez, Jacqueline Cabrera, Fiordaliza Rodriguez and Angel Cruz (a Civil Court Judge designated AJFC)
Queens County 11 <sup>th</sup> JD	Alicia Elloras-Ally, Supervising Judge – AJSC, Connie Gonzalez
Kings County 2 <sup>nd</sup> JD	<b>NO LATINOS</b>
Richmond County 13 <sup>th</sup> JD	<b>NO LATINOS</b>

### The Latino Family Court Justices Outside of NYC:

Nassau County	Sylvia Cabana
Suffolk County	Karen Kerr, Suffolk Supreme, (AJSC), Supervising Judge – District Court
Westchester County	Nilda Morales-Horowitz & Maritza Fugaro-Norton
Rockland County	Chris Exias (also sit in County & Surrogates Court)
Monroe County	Maria J. Cubillos-Reed
Monroe County - Support Magistrate*	Maritza Buitrago <i>*has been unable to garner support for Family Court election.</i>

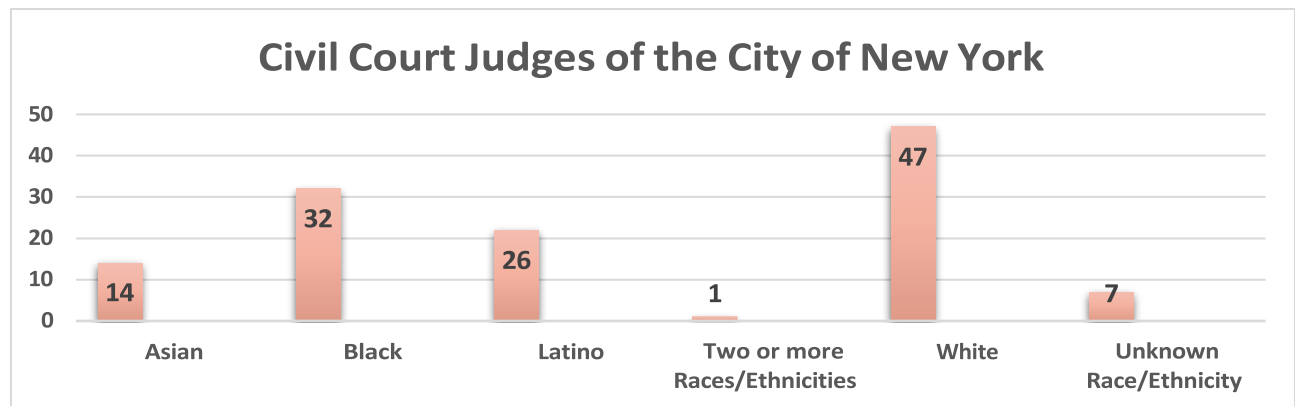
As in the other courts, this data likewise demonstrates that all over New York City despite the significant populations of people of color, the Family Courts that are charged with resolving family matters are inadequately represented in the judiciary. In the Family Courts, where the interplay of cultural customs and norms often play a crucial factor in the interpersonal and inter-family dynamics having a judiciary that is familiar with those nuances is critical.

It is unfathomable that Kings County and Richmond County, both with Latino populations in excess of 19% have ZERO Latino representation on the bench. The lack of representation, begs the question, are Latino and Asian families not entitled to a judiciary that looks like them, that shares similar norms and familiar with their culture. A court with a diversified bench affords judges the ability to confer with colleagues of different backgrounds for guidance on navigating the issues that may arise amongst differing ethnic groups. The more diverse a judiciary the better equipped they are to resolve the myriads of conflicts that are presented to courts daily. The families of New York State deserve better.

## New York City Civil Courts

The Civil Court of the City of New York has jurisdiction over civil cases and other matters referred to it by the Supreme Court. The court consists of three (3) parts: General Civil (involving matters seeking monetary relief of up to \$50,000, Housing (see description below) and Small Claims (which hears civil cases involving controversies seeking monetary relief up to \$10,000). Civil Court Judges are primarily elected in the county of their residence for a 10-year term. Interim vacancies are filled by the Mayor.<sup>37</sup>

According to OCA stats, there are currently one-hundred twenty-seven (**127**) Civil Court Judges broken down as reflected in the following chart. Currently there are **twenty-seven (26)** Latinos sitting on the NYC Civil Court.



<sup>38</sup>

The Latino Civil Court Judges are spread out amongst all the city counties except for Richmond, which as in every other judicial category, has never elected a Latino judge. See following chart for details.

Judicial District	Civil Court Judge	Year(s) of Election
1 <sup>st</sup> New York  (9)  *county-wide seats	Denise Dominquez Lisa Headley Betty Lugo Emily Morales Minerva* Carmen A. Pacheco (Supv. Judge, Civil Ct – Kings) Jose Padilla Leticia Ramirez* Elizabeth Shamahs Crystal Villaseñor	'13 & '23 '15 '21 '16 '22  '14 & '24 '20 '24 '24

<sup>37</sup> [Judges - NYCivil | NYCOURTS.GOV](#) Note: Assessment of Mayoral appointments not possible without filing a FOIL request as stats are not otherwise available.

<sup>38</sup> New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Judicial Demographic Information, January 2025.

12 <sup>th</sup> The Bronx  <b>(10)</b>	Jessica Bourbon Angel Cruz (AJFC) Diomarys Escano-Bell Jessica Flores Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor (Supv. Judge, Criminal Court) Cynthia Isales Wanda Negron Joaquin E. Orellana Brenda Rivera Eliezer Rodriguez	‘19 ‘24 ‘24 ‘21 ‘22  ‘22 ‘20 ‘23 ‘14 & ‘24 ‘24
2 <sup>nd</sup> Kings <b>(3)</b>	Frederick C. Arriaga  Patrick Hayes Torres Javier Ortiz	‘07 *then appointed ‘22 ‘23
11 <sup>th</sup> Queens <b>(4)</b>	Maria T. Gonzalez Glenda Hernandez Sharifa Nasser Cuellar Sandra Perez	‘22 ‘24 ‘24 ‘23

As is evident from the above chart, the lack of nomination and election of qualified Latina/o Civil Court Judges to Supreme Court is not due to an absence of eligible, qualified and experienced judges. Over the last decade, several have sought, and but for Judge Mary Rosado, none have been able to secure the support and nomination for a Supreme Court seat. There is no justification for the lack of Latino representation on the Supreme Court in New York County or the Civil Court of the City of New York. Indeed, even on the rare occasions that a Latino/a candidate is successful in being voted out of the Judicial Screening Panels, they are then systematically overlooked. The most recent example of which was a Latina candidate whose eight-year stellar track record and experience as a highly regarded Supervising Judge were insufficient to win the nomination.

Manhattan is the home to 1.6 million New Yorkers, of which approximately 24.6% or 393,600 are of Hispanic/Latino heritage. Hence, against the available pipeline and talent seeking elevation and an opportunity to serve the same community the appointing authority professes to represent, it is on the Manhattan Democratic Committee, under the leadership of New York County Leader Keith Wright, to correct the years of stagnation **in nominating equitably amongst candidates from all communities.**

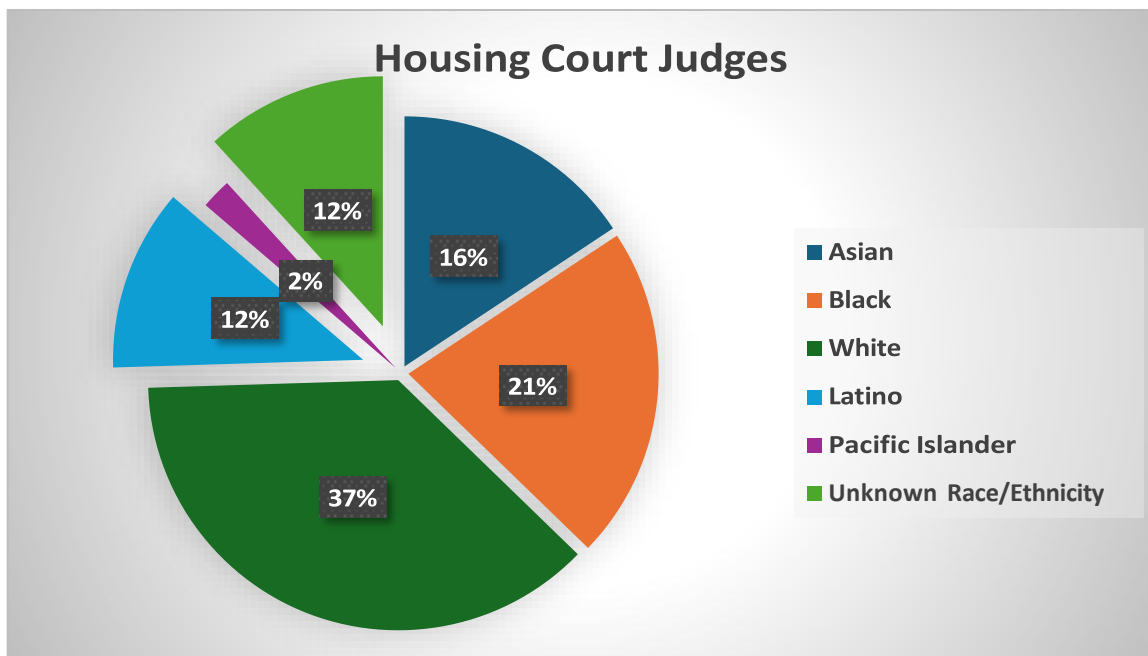
## Housing Court

The Housing Part hears landlord-tenant matters and cases involving maintenance of



housing standards. Housing Court Judges are appointed by OCA after undergoing a judicial screening and interview process. Housing Court Judges sit for five (5) year terms.

According to OCA stats, of the approximately fifty-two (**52**) Housing Court Judges there are eight (**8**) **Asians**, eleven (**11**) Blacks, one (**1**) Pacific Islander, six (**6**) Unknown Race/Ethnicity and seven (**7**) Latinos.<sup>39</sup> However, LJA stats and membership records have identified only the following six (6) Latino judges currently sitting in the Housing Court: Alberto Gonzalez, Sergio Jimenez, Francis Ortiz (Supervising Judge of the Housing Court, NY County), Javier E. Ortiz, Enedina Pilar Sanchez and Bryant Tovar.



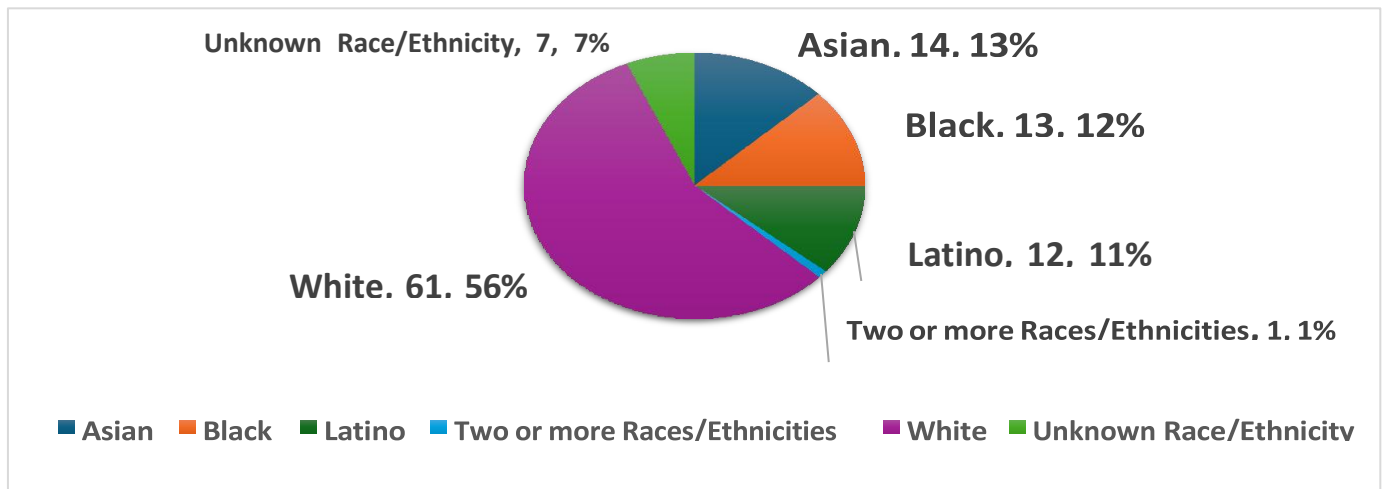
## Criminal Court

The Criminal Court of the City of New York has jurisdiction over misdemeanors and violations. Judges of the Criminal Court also act as arraigning magistrates and are empowered to conduct preliminary hearings in felony cases. Criminal Court Judges are appointed by the mayor upon completion of judicial screening and recommendation from the Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Judiciary for a term of a ten years.<sup>40</sup>

According to OCA Stats, there are currently one-hundred and eight (**108**) appointed Criminal Court Judges. Of the **108** Criminal Court Judges there are fourteen (**14**) **Asians**, thirteen (**13**) Blacks, twelve (**12**) Latinos, sixty-one (**61**) Whites, one (**1**) of Two or more Races/Ethnicities and seven (**7**) of Unknown Race/Ethnicity.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov>



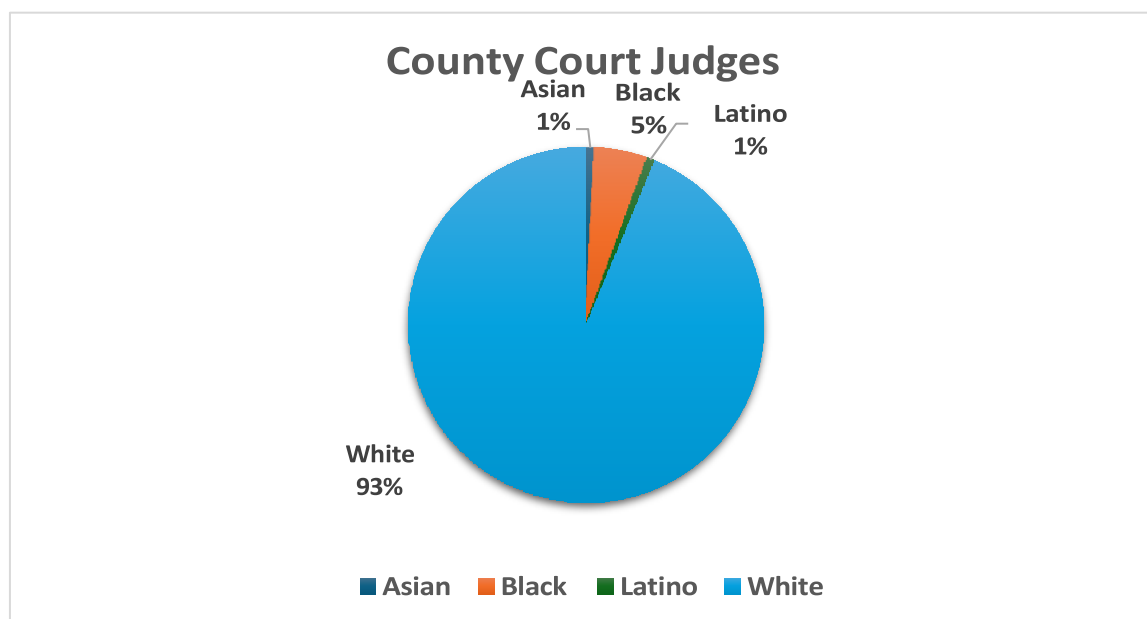
<b>Criminal Court Judges</b>	<b>Judicial District</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Year of Appointment</b>
Juan Abreu	12 <sup>th</sup>		'24
Frederick Arriaga	2 <sup>nd</sup>	(AJSC, Drug Treatment Ct.)	'17
Angela Badamo	1 <sup>st</sup>	(AJSC)	'17
Mary Bejarano	11 <sup>th</sup>	(AJSC/AJFC)	'17
Keshia J. Espinal	1 <sup>st</sup>	Supv. Judge, Kings County	'17, '21
Diego A. Freire	11 <sup>th</sup>		'21
Maria T. Gonzalez	11 <sup>th</sup>	(Elected Civil –'22)	
Glenda M. Hernandez		(Elected Civil- '24)	
Wanda L. Licitra	11 <sup>th</sup>		'19
Marisol Martinez-Alonso	1 <sup>st</sup>	(AJSC)	'18, '22
Valentina Morales	1 <sup>st</sup>	(AJSC)	'21
Edwin Novillo	11 <sup>th</sup>	Supv. Judge (AJSC/AJFC)	'18
Raymond Rodriguez	13 <sup>th</sup>	AJ – 13 <sup>th</sup> JD	'13, '18, '20
Elizabeth Shamahs	1 <sup>st</sup>	(Elected Civil-'24)	
Sharifa Nassar Cuella	11 <sup>th</sup>	(Elected Civil-'24)	

## Courts Outside New York City

### County Courts

The County Court is established in each county outside of New York City. The court is authorized to preside over the prosecution of all crimes committed within the county. In practice, however, other courts of limited jurisdiction will handle arraignments and other preliminary proceedings as well as trials of misdemeanors and minor offenses. It also has limited jurisdiction over civil cases involving amounts of up to \$25,000, and certain types of real property actions, like foreclosures. The court also serves as an intermediate appellate court for review of city and town court actions. In some rural counties, the County Court Judge also functions as an Acting Supreme Court Justice, Family Court Judge and the Surrogate. These judges are referred to as a “multi-hat judge” are elected by the constituents in their region for a term of ten (10) years.<sup>41</sup>

According to OCA stats, there are one-hundred twenty-seven (**127**) elected County Court Judges statewide. Of the **127** County Court Judges there are one-hundred nineteen (**119**) Whites or **93%**, six (**6**) Blacks or **5%** and one (**1**) Asian and one (**1**) Latino or **1%** respectively. Our sole Latino/Hispanic member, the Hon. Philip Goglas was elected to the County Court in 2014 and sits in the Suffolk County Family Court (AJSC – AJFC /Domestic Violence Part).

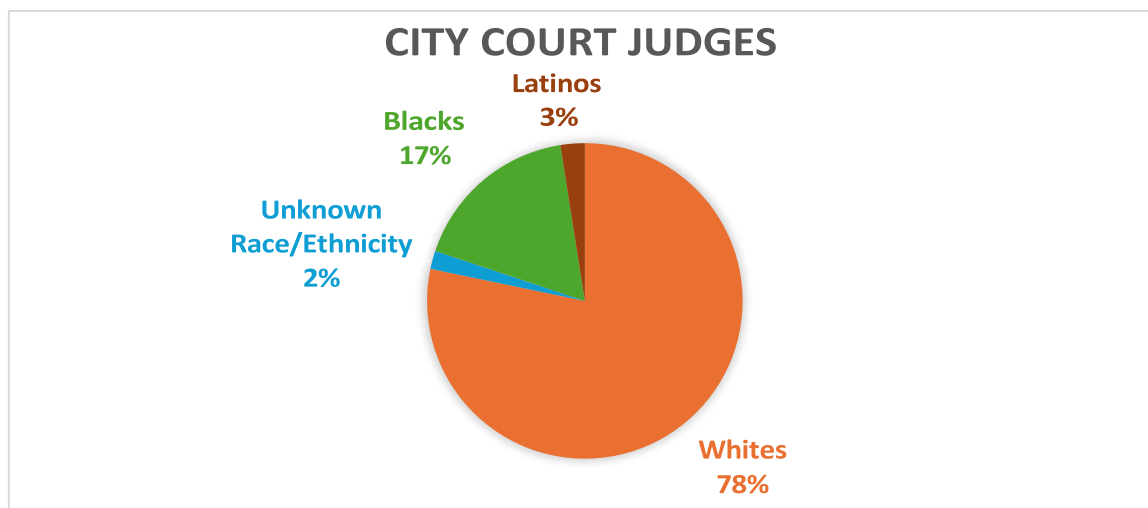


<sup>41</sup> <https://ww2.nycourts.gov>

## City Courts

There are City Courts in 61 cities and their jurisdiction includes criminal matters involving misdemeanors and lesser offenses and serve as arraigning magistrates with the power to conduct preliminary hearings in felony cases. The City Court also handles civil matters involving claims of up of \$15,000. Some City Courts also have separate parts to hear small claims, housing, drug treatment, mental health and domestic violence cases.<sup>42</sup> The term of office for a full-time City Court Judge is 10 years, and six years for a part-time judge.<sup>43</sup>

OCA stats reveal that there are one-hundred and sixty-two (**162**) appointed and/or elected City Court judges throughout New York. Currently there are twenty-eight (**28**) Blacks, one-hundred twenty-six (**126**) Whites, three (**3**) of Unknown Race/Ethnicity and four (**5**) Latinos. Amongst the Latino City Court Judges, two (**3**) are elected from the 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Yonkers – Karen Beltran & Ana Medina and Lisette Fernandez (Peekskill), one (**1**) Nichelle Johnson – Mt. Vernon City Court and one (**1**) elected from the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Michael Lopez – Rochester City Court.<sup>44</sup>



A Latina part-time City Court Judge, Lisette Fernandez of the Peekskill City Court was passed over for a full-time position in 2024, after serving since 2020. Judge Fernandez has since filed a federal lawsuit claiming the Peekskill City Common Council retaliated against her following a sexual harassment, sex discrimination and a hostile work environment complaint against her co-judge, Reginald J. Johnson. Following her complaint about Johnson's alleged unlawful behavior, an investigation ensued by the

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<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> New York State Unified Court System, Statewide Judicial Demographic Information, January 2025.

New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct and resulted in his voluntary resignation from the bench.<sup>45</sup>

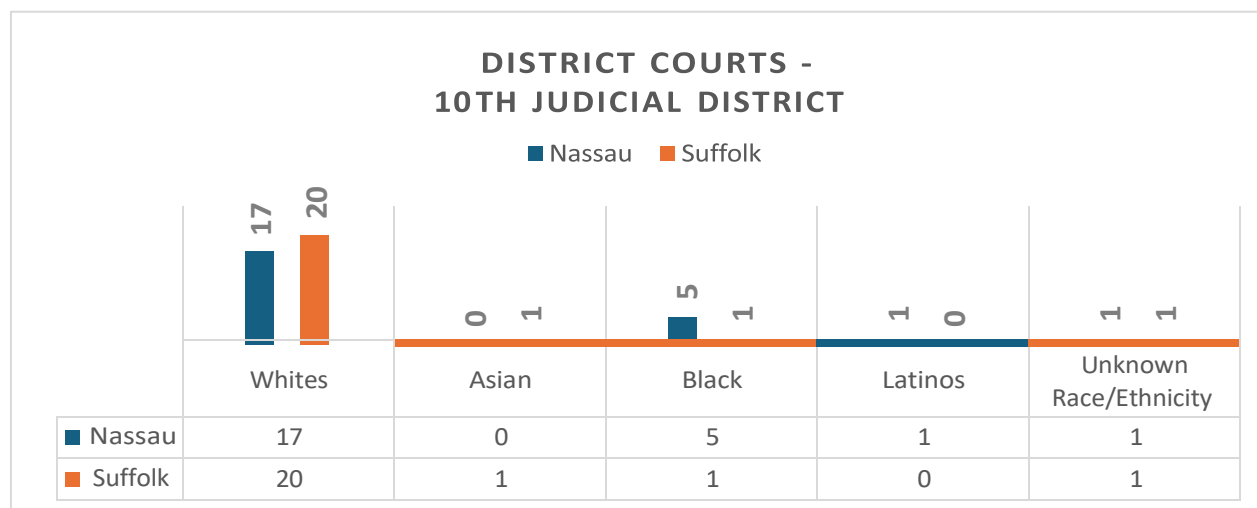
## District Courts

The state-level District Courts are trial courts of limited jurisdiction that exist in the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, in Nassau County and western towns of Suffolk County. These courts handle criminal matters involving misdemeanors and violations and civil actions involving claims up to \$15,000. (These courts effectively replace the town justice courts in those areas).

There are currently twenty-four **(24)** elected Nassau County District Court Judges. In 2024, Judge Veronica Renta Irwin, was elected to the Nassau County District Court thereby making her the only Latina Judge in the county. She is only the second judge of Latino descent to ever sit on this court, the first being the Hon. Helen Voutsinas (elected fifteen years ago in 2010).<sup>46</sup>

There are twenty-three **(23)** elected Suffolk County District Court Judges. Currently there are ***no Latinos*** elected to the District Court in Suffolk County.

In a combined judicial district representing over 2.9 million people, and an average population of 19% Hispanic/Latino, it is simply unacceptable that only one District Court Judge currently represents a community that comprises nearly one-fifth (1/5<sup>th</sup>) of the Long Island population.



<sup>45</sup> [Judge Claims Council Picked Less-Qualified Candidates – Peekskill Herald](#)

<sup>46</sup> [LJA History Project: A Documentary Chronicling the History of Latino Judges in New York State - Historical Society of the New York Courts.](#)

## NON-STATE PAID JUDGES

Overall New York State Judiciary Chart:

Judicial categories	Total # of Judges	Total # of Latino Judges	Total Percentage of Latino Judges
State Paid Judges	1364	120	8.80%
<b>Non-State Paid Judges</b>	<b>1729</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.578%</b>
Total NYS Judiciary	3093	130	4.5%

## THE TOWN & VILLAGE COURTS

Town and Village Courts have criminal jurisdiction over violations and misdemeanors and civil jurisdiction over claims of up to \$3,000. As magistrates, Town and Village Court Justices hold arraignments and preliminary hearings for those charged with more serious crimes. Traffic infractions are also heard in these courts.

Non-attorneys are eligible to seek appointment and/or election to the Town & Village Courts. The term of office is four (4) years. Justices to these courts are subject to all OCA mandates and rules of conduct as all members of the judiciary.

Currently there are **1,729** Town & Village Justices throughout the judicial districts outside the City of New York, within the Third through the Eighth Judicial Districts.

Latinos occupy only **ten (10) out of the 1,729 seats or 0.578%**.



Attempts to gather detailed Racial/Ethnic demographic information of these courts is challenging. In response to request for information, OCA responded that as the statutory demographic reporting mandate does not apply to the Town & Village Courts, they did not possess the Racial and Ethnic Breakdown of these courts.<sup>47</sup> (Any belatedly acquired data will be released in an amended version of this report).

The following chart sets forth the existing Latino judiciary in the Town & Village Courts of our state.

<b>Judicial District</b>	<b>Town &amp; Village Justice (*non-attorney Justices)</b>	<b>Year of Election/ Appointment</b>	<b>Current Assignment</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> Westchester	Jose Castaneda	'21 '07	Rye, Town Justice Portchester Village Court
9 <sup>th</sup> Rockland	Roselina D'Annucci (Serrano)	'17, '21	West Haverstraw Village Court
9 <sup>th</sup> Dutchess	Ibis Guzman *	'18, '21	Town Justice, Pine Plains
9 <sup>th</sup> Orange	Yvette Rosario	'20, '24	Monroe Village Court
9 <sup>th</sup> Westchester	Livia Rodriguez	'24	Town Justice, Cortlandt
9 <sup>th</sup> Dutchess	William Sanchez *	'23	Town Justice, Rhinebeck
9 <sup>th</sup> Rockland	Ivonne Santos	'20, '24	Town Justice, Haverstraw
9 <sup>th</sup> Rockland	Alejandra Silva	'24	Town Justice, Ramapo
4 <sup>th</sup> St. Lawrence	Christopher Velez	'23	Town Justice, Hermon
6 <sup>th</sup> Broome	Alfonso Oretaga	'21	Endicott Village Court

**Needless to say, in a state with a Latino population of twenty percent having an upstate judiciary that is only 0.578% of the 1,729 Town & Village Justices is nothing shy of disgraceful.**

Again, our community must ask - is twenty percent of your citizenry not entitled to representation? Not even a semblance of it. These statistics demonstrate an utter lack of regard for the Latino/Hispanic population of New York State. For too long the Latino

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<sup>47</sup> The mandatory collection of demographic information required under JL Section 212 **only** applies to state-paid judges and justices, not to the Town & Village Courts throughout the state.

community has been disregarded. The popular refrain of “Peoples of Color” and “Black and Brown communities” is just that, words. It has not translated into appointments, nominations or elections of Latinos/Hispanics in these courts or in these upper NYS regions. Admittedly, all non-white communities are sparsely represented. And while African Americans have fared better than Latinos and Asians, they too are underrepresented in these courts and this region.

## Unified Court System’s Advisory Groups

“The Unified Court System’s Advisory Groups provide input and guidance to judicial leadership and the Office of Court Administration on critical issues impacting the administration of justice in New York State courts.”

These groups are composed of judges, attorneys, court staff and experts in varying fields and subjects. The stated goal of the Advisory Groups is to “incorporate diverse perspectives in examining and recommending laws, rules, policies, and programs to advance equal access to justice, promote public trust in the courts, encourage education and understanding about the court system, and support the just, fair, and timely resolution of matters that come before New York State courts.

Since the 2020 Report, there have been some gains in appointments to the various Advisory Groups. In particular, we appreciate that there has been a marked increase in the elevation of Latino Judges as Chairs and Co-Chairs to the various Advisory Groups in our court system. However, like in the courts, our numbers continue to lag our demographic representation in the state. In view of the stated goals of these Advisory Groups, far greater representation by Latino members of the judiciary is essential, if these objectives are to be fully realized. The following is the list, as it appears on the NYS Courts website.<sup>48</sup>

<b>Name of Committee’s, Commission’s or Task Force</b>	<b>Total Number of Members</b>	<b>Latino Judicial Members/Chairs</b>
<i>Advisory Committee on <b>Access for People with Disabilities</b></i>	26	<b>2</b> / Co-Chair, Hon. Sergio Jimenez & Hon. Michael R. Cuevas
<i>Permanent Commission on <b>Access to Justice</b></i>	35	<b>No Latino Judges</b>
<i>Advisory Committee on <b>Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)</b></i>	38	<b>2</b> / Co-Chair, Hon. Doris Gonzalez & Hon. Rita Mella 1/Attorney: Gretchen Gonzalez

<sup>48</sup> [NYCOURTS.GOV](https://www.nycourts.gov) - New York State Unified Court System



<i>Advisory Committee on <b>Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Courts</b></i>	40	<b>4/</b> Hon. Fernando Camacho, Hon. Patria Frias-Colon, Hon. Richard Rivera & Hon. Sallie Manzanet-Daniels ( <i>also Member of the National Courts and Sciences Institute, Data Science &amp; AI Strategic Initiative Jurisdiction Team</i> ). 1/ Attorney: Diana Colón
Board of Governors, <i><b>Attorney-Client Fee Dispute Resolution Program</b></i>	17	<b>No Latino Judges</b>
<i>Advisory Council, Attorney Emeritus Program</i>	20	<b>No Latino Judges</b> 1 / Attorney: Prof. Natalie Gomez-Velez, CUNY Law, <i>Interim Dean</i>
<i>Advisory Committee on <b>Civil Practice</b></i>	42	<b>1/</b> Hon. Bianka Perez <b>2/Attorneys:</b> Lucille Fontana and Angelicgue Moreno
<i>Advisory Council on <b>Commercial Division</b></i>	56	<b>2/</b> Hon. Carmen A. Pacheco & Hon. Charles E. Ramos (Ret.) 1/ Attorney: Roger Maldonado
<i><b>Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Board</b></i>	16	<b>3/</b> Chair, Hon. Carmen A. Pacheco Hon. Keisha J. Espinal & Hon. Damaris Torrent
<i><b>Court Modernization Action Committee (CMAC)</b></i>	35	<b>3/</b> Co-Chair, Hon. Patria Frias-Colón Hon. Alicea Elloras-Ally & Hon. Raymond L. Rodriguez 1/Attorney: Roger Maldonado
<i>Committee on <b>Criminal Jury Instructions and Model Colloquies</b></i>	29	<b>3/</b> Hon. Angela Badamo Hon. Fernando Camacho Hon. Michelle Johnson-Bell
<i>Advisory Committee on <b>Criminal Law &amp; Procedure</b></i>	32	<b>3/</b> Hon. Betty Calvo-Torres, Hon. Fernando Camacho & Hon. Raymond Rodriguez
<i>Judicial Committee on <b>Elder Justice</b></i>	42	<b>1/</b> Hon. Nelida Malave -Gonzalez <b>2/ Attorneys:</b> Diana Colón & Veronica Escobar
<i><b>Ethics Commission for NYS UCS</b></i>	5	<b>1/</b> Hon. Carmen R. Velasquez

<b>Family Court</b> <i>Advisory and Rules Committee</i>	33	<b>3/</b> Co-Chair – Hon. Richard Rivera Hon. Alicea Elloras-Ally & Hon. Connie Gonzalez
<b>Guardianship</b> <i>Advisory Committee</i>	30	<b>No Latino Judges</b> 2/ Attorneys: Diana Colón & Olga R. Perez-Mendez and 1/ Court Staff: Yesenia Herrera
<i>Committee on</i> <b>Guide to New York Evidence</b>	29	<b>3/</b> Hon. Angela Badamo, Hon. Fernando Camacho & Hon. Michelle Johnson-Bell
<i>Advisory Committee on</i> <b>Judicial Ethics</b>	28	<b>2/</b> Hon. Joanne Quiñones & Hon. Julio Rodriguez
<i>Permanent Commission on</i> <b>Justice for Families</b>	21 Judges 38 non-judges (2 are Latino)	<b>4/</b> Co-Chair, Hon. Richard Rivera Hon. Janette Cortes-Gomez, Hon. Alicea Elloras-Ally & Magistrate Maritza C. Buitrago
<b>Justice Task Force</b>	18 Permanent 7 Ex Officio  8 Advisory	<b>1/</b> Hon. Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick (Ret.); 1/ Rosanna Rosado, Comm. NYS Div. of Crim Justice  none
<i>Advisory Committee on</i> <b>Language Access</b>	29	<b>1/</b> Hon. Alicia Elloras-Ally 3 / Attorneys: Ananias Grajales, Felipe A. Garcia & Prof. Natalie Gomez-Velez and 1/Rene Medina ( <i>Interpreter Supervisor</i> )
<i>LGBTQ Commission (Richard C. Failla Commission)</i>	29	<b>3/</b> Hon. James Hyer, Hon. Rita Mella & Hon. Javier Vargas
<b>Matrimonial Practice</b> <i>Advisory and Rules Committee</i>	37	<b>1/</b> Hon. Wanda Negron
<i>Judicial Task Force on</i> <b>Mental Illness</b>	53	<b>4/</b> Hon. Doris M. Gonzalez, Hon. Juan Merchan, Hon. Valentina Morales & Hon. Damaris Torrent 1/non-judicial: Patricia Hernandez, LCSQ
<i>Advisory Council for</i> <b>NYC Housing Court</b>	14	3/Attorneys: Carlos Perez-Hall, Angela Fernandez & Prof. Jennifer M. Fernandez

<i>Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on <b>Racial and Ethnic Fairness</b></i>	26	<b>5</b> / Hon. Veronica Romero Guerrero, Hon. Michael C. Lopez, Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones, Hon. Richard Rivera (former co-chair) and Magistrate Maritza C. Buitrago
<i><b>State-Federal Judicial Council</b></i>	17 members 40 Advisory	<b>1</b> / Hon. Ramón Rivera <b>1</b> / Hon. Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick (Ret.)
<i><b>Surrogates Court</b> Advisory Committee</i>	24	<b>2</b> / Hon. Margarita Lopez Torres (Ret.) & Hon. Javier Ortiz
<i><b>Tribal Courts</b> Committee of UCS</i>		*No information available
<i>Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin Commission on <b>Women in the Courts</b></i>	31	<b>1</b> / Co-Chair, Hon. Llínét Rosado

## Conclusions

The status of Latinos/Hispanics in the New York State judiciary remains relatively unchanged. While our community continues to add to our ranks each year, our rate is barely able to keep up with the normal attrition of judges who retire or otherwise leave judicial service.

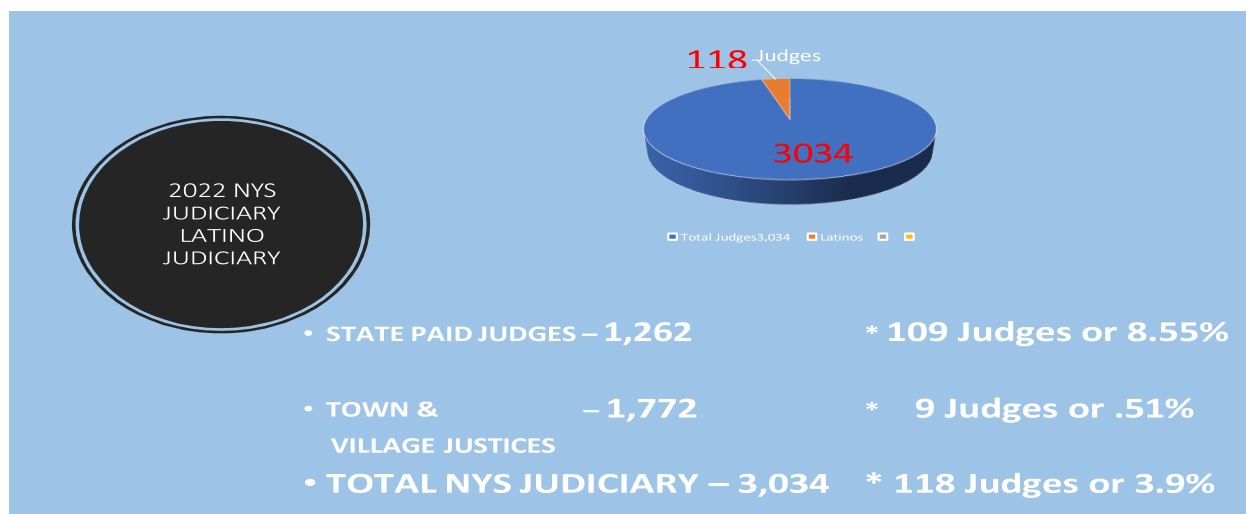
In 2022, an assessment of the status of Latinos in the judiciary was made for the purposes of recording that information during the production of our Latino Judges Association – History Project.<sup>49</sup>

The following charts demonstrate that the change is negligible, over the last five years we have a net gain of only 12 additional judges since 2020.

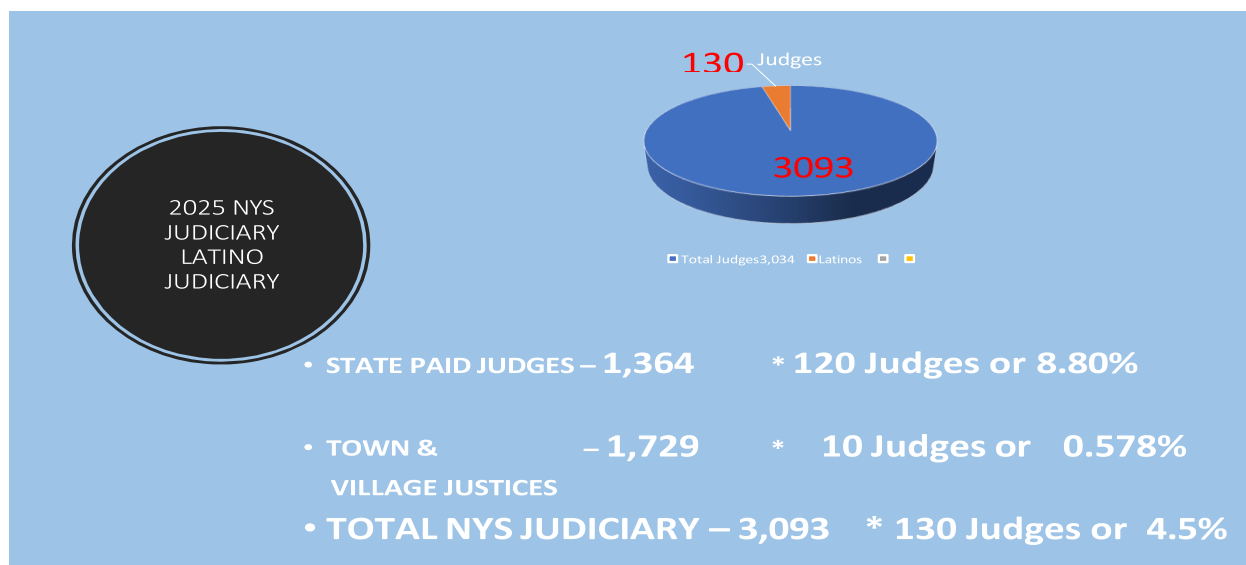
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<sup>49</sup> <https://latinojudgesassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/overview-of-latino-judges-2020-updated-with-preamble.pdf>

In 2020, the stats were:



As compared to our current 2025 stats:



As was thoroughly explored, and reconfirmed, in the 2020 report by Special Advisor on Equal Justice in the Courts Report prepared by Secretary Jeh Johnson, there exist issues of institutional racism within New York State’s Unified Court System.<sup>50</sup> The report outlined a host of recommendations on how to ameliorate some of the issues identified, As a direct result, OCA established the Equal Justice Initiative to implement some of those recommendations.

<sup>50</sup> [SpecialAdviserEqualJusticeReport.pdf](#)

Five years ago, the first iteration of this report highlighted many of the same shortfalls that persist today. What is evident is that despite the population gains in the Latino and Asian communities, our respective representation in the judiciary fails to keep pace with our growth. Concomitantly, our White and Black/African American counterparts' representation in the judiciary exceeds their respective population levels in the state. While this report does not suggest that a strict quota formula be employed, our demographic make-up in the state certainly should be utilized as a measure for determining whether the racial and ethnic composition of our judiciary reflects the citizenry it is supposed to represent.

It is clear there has been insufficient focus on the issue of Latino and Asian judicial stagnation in our court system. As this report outlined, while there exist a multitude of committees and commissions which develop and sponsor a multitude of important initiatives more broadly; little focus has been paid over the last two decades to the lack of diversity amongst the Latino and Asian communities specifically.

Hence, I recommend the LJA and the Asian American Judges Association of N.Y. form an independent Latino & Asian Judicial Committee to study and represent the interest of our respective members and community. We must continue to collect and preserve the history of our evolving judiciary. Documenting the data permits comparison and a study of the trends, or lack thereof. After all, no one will advocate for us better than us.

It is vital that we collectively educate our communities about how judges are made and which of their political leaders is responsible for ensuring their communities' representation, or not. The community must be informed and empowered so that they may hold their leaders to account and achieve the judicial representation they want in their communities.

As New Yorkers we are fortunate to live in one of the most diverse places in the world. We are a beautiful mosaic of people from all corners of the earth, and our Court system should likewise reflect the rich diaspora that is New York.

We can do better, and we must.