



NHCSL

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

RESOLUTION No. 2022-08

Celebrating Fort Cavazos, Calling for the Appointment of a Representative Number of Hispanics to Flag Officer Positions and for the Confirmation of General Martínez-López to Assistant Secretary of Defense

Reported to the Caucus by the NHCSL Veterans and Military Affairs Task Force
Sen. Nilsa Cruz Pérez (NJ), Chair

**Sponsored by
Sen. Nilsa Cruz Pérez (NJ)**

Unanimously ratified by the Caucus on December 1, 2022

WHEREAS, the US Army base currently known as Fort Hood, in central Texas, is the largest active-duty armored post in the U.S. Armed Forces;¹ and,

WHEREAS, according to the Census, 24.2% of the population of Fort Hood are Hispanic;² and,

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2022, the Commission on the Naming of Items of the DoD that Commemorate the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America (the Naming Commission) recommended that Fort Hood be renamed after General Richard E. Cavazos;³ and,

¹ U.S. Army, [U.S. Army Fort Hood About](#).

² US Census Bureau, [Explore Census Data](#)

³ [Naming Commission Recommendation of Fort Cavazos](#)

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WHEREAS, Richard E. Cavazos was the first Hispanic-American to achieve the rank of four-star General in 1982;⁴ and,

WHEREAS, a sixth-generation Texan, then 1st Lieutenant Cavazos's first combat role was to lead Company E, 2d Battalion, of the 65th Infantry Regiment composed mainly of Puerto Rican soldiers in the Korean War, "rallying his men to make three separate charges on a well-entrenched enemy position, [returning] to the field five separate times to personally evacuate his wounded men before accepting treatment for his own injuries;"⁵ and,

WHEREAS, for those actions, Cavazos earned the Distinguished Service Cross, and later in his career went on to earn another Distinguished Service Cross in the Vietnam War, and additionally earned "two Legions of Merit, a Silver Star, five Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, and many other medals and awards for exceptional service in war and peace;"⁶ and,

WHEREAS, General Cavazos's final assignment was as head of the U.S. Army Forces Command;⁷ and,

WHEREAS, on October 6, 2022, the Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin adopted the recommendation of the Naming Commission to rename Fort Hood as Fort Cavazos;⁸ and,

WHEREAS, upon it's renaming, Fort Cavazos will remain the Army's premier installation to train and deploy heavy forces;⁹ and,

WHEREAS, on November 11, 2021 President Biden nominated another great Hispanic military leader, Dr. Lester Martínez-López, a retired Major General of the US Army, family physician, and Florida resident, to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; and,

WHEREAS, General Martínez grew up in Maricao, Puerto Rico, and earned a medical degree from the University of Puerto Rico; and,

WHEREAS, General Martínez was the first Hispanic to head the Army Medical and Research Command (USAMRDC) at Fort Detrick, Maryland, where he directed the Army's worldwide medical research, acquisition, and logistics program; and,

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Department of Defense, [Implementation of Naming Commission Recommendations](#) (Oct. 6, 2022)

⁹ U.S. Army, [Fort Hood](#)

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WHEREAS, General Martínez also was the commander of three distinct hospitals, oversaw military health support during Hurricane Mitch in Central America, and served as the Chief Medical Officer of the United Nations Mission in Haiti; and,

WHEREAS, Hispanics are the fastest growing population in the military¹⁰ with 17.7% of active enlisted corps;¹¹ and,

WHEREAS, Hispanics only make up 11–12% of the enrollment in the US Service Academies despite being 17% of non-military postsecondary institutions;¹² and,

WHEREAS, Hispanics are only 10.5% of Warrant officers, 9.3% of Company or Junior-grade officers, 6.4% of Field or Mid-grade officers, and 2.6% of General or Flag officers;¹³ and,

WHEREAS, that meant that as of 2020, despite the example set by General Cavazos, only 42 of the 1626 General or Flag officers in the Total DoD Military Force were Hispanic;¹⁴ and,

WHEREAS, in non-military employment law cases, courts have long accepted that statistical evidence of gross disparities in hiring and promotion are evidence of a discriminatory motive.¹⁵

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators celebrates the renaming of Fort Hood to Fort Cavazos and joins the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, and President Biden in honoring General Richard Cavazos's service to our country; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators calls on the President and the Department of Defense to honor the legacy of General Cavazos by ending discrimination against Hispanics in promotions to officer ranks, especially General and Flag officer ranks; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators calls on the United States Senate to confirm President Biden's nomination of retired

¹⁰ Adrianna Rodriguez, [Latinos are fastest growing population in US military, but higher ranks remain out of reach](#) (USA Today, Jun. 11, 2020)

¹¹ [MilitaryOneSource](#). (As of the latest 2020 data, Hispanics are 16.9% of Army enlisted, 18.1% of Navy enlisted, 25.4% of Marine Corps enlisted, and 18.7% of Air Force enlisted).

¹² Congressional Research Service, [Defense Primer: Military Service Academies](#) (Dec. 9, 2021) (Hispanics are 12% of the US Military Academy at West Point and the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, and 11% of the US Air Force Academy)

¹³ [MilitaryOneSource](#). (As of the latest 2020 data, Hispanics are 3.1% of Army General or Flag officers, 2.2% of Navy General or Flag officers, 4% of Marine Corps General or Flag officers, and 2.1% of Air Force General or Flag officers).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See for example *McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green*, 411 U.S. 792, 805 (1973). And see U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, [CM-604 Theories of Discrimination](#).

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Major General Dr. Lester Martínez-López to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.

THE VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS TASK FORCE UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDED THIS RESOLUTION TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THIS RESOLUTION AT ITS MEETING OF NOVEMBER 18, 2022.

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS UNANIMOUSLY AMENDED AND RATIFIED THIS RESOLUTION ON DECEMBER 1, 2022 AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA.

