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## CONGRESSWOMAN ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ: A GREEN NEW DEAL OUTRIDER

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### Resumen

Desde 1899, al menos un hispano ha servido en cada Congreso de los Estados Unidos. Cuando el 116º Congreso de los Estados Unidos se reunió el 3 de enero de 2019, contenía el mayor número de hispanos en su historia con un récord de 48 entre ambas cámaras (44 en la Cámara de Representantes y 4 en el Senado). Este artículo se centra en la figura de Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, quien quizás sea la congresista hispana más importante en el Congreso actual, cuya principal prioridad política es un "New Deal Verde", un plan integral para abordar el cambio climático en los Estados Unidos.

**Palabras clave:** 116º Congreso, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Green New Deal, congresistas hispanos, representación.

### Abstract

Since 1899, at least one Hispanic has served in every Congress of the United States (U.S.). When the U.S. 116<sup>th</sup> Congress convened on January 3, 2019, it comprised the highest number of Hispanics in its history with a record of 48 between both chambers (44 in the House of Representatives and 4 in the Senate). This article focuses on the figure of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, perhaps being the most important emerging Hispanic member in the current Congress, whose top policy priority is a "Green New Deal", a comprehensive plan to address climate change in the U.S.

**Keywords:** 116th Congress, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Green New Deal, Hispanic Congresswomen, representation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The substantial presence of Hispanics<sup>3</sup> in the U.S. society did not immediately translate into a degree of comparative representation in Congress. Hispanics have accounted for more than 50% of the population growth in the United States, and now they represent more than 18.5% of the total with an estimated figure of 60.6 million people according to the data by the U.S. Census Bureau.

But despite the growing proportion of Hispanics in the population of the United States, the proportion of representation remained unchanged in Congress for more than 30 years. According to Sharon R. Ennis, Merays Ríos-Vargas, and Nora C- Albert in every Congress of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: “[T]here was a Hispanic in Congress for every 1.62 million Hispanics in the country” (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas & Albert 2010: 65).

Based on this premise, the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019 – 2021) is the most racially and ethnically diverse ever, with more than one-in-five voting member belonging to racial or ethnic minorities. Overall, there are a total of 48 Hispanic members serving on it, which represents around 8% of the total and, above all, a record number in history. Of these 48 members, 44 of them serve in the House of Representatives (91.6%), for only 4 of them who do so in the Senate (8.4%).

The 44 Hispanic members in the House of Representatives are distributed as follows: 37 belong to the Democratic Party whilst just 7 belong to the Republican Party (16%). Out of these 44 Hispanics, there are 30 men vs. 14 women. In the case of the Senate, there is a balanced representation between both parties, belonging 2 of them to each one, 3 men and 1 woman. Out of these figures, anyone following the rise to power of representative Ocasio-Cortez has probably heard about the Green New Deal.

This was an idea introduced by representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and senator Ed Markey in early 2019 to address climate change by investing federal money in large-scale infrastructure projects that would facilitate the country transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Ocasio-Cortez’s plan requests for meeting eventually 100% of national power demand through renewable sources, eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, and guaranteeing a job to any citizen who aims at being employed.

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<sup>3</sup> At this point, we must clarify that, by stylistic conventionality, under the Hispanic umbrella we will shelter both Hispanics and Latinxs, which opens the term to people with origins in non-Spanish-speaking Latin-American countries. It is also interesting to note that European citizens who are born in Spain are also considered under the label - “Hispanic”- while in the US.

However, some conservative critics are concerned that this plan could cost trillions of dollars to U.S. contributors. The Green New Deal as proposed by Ocasio-Cortez aims to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, but it also seeks to address problems such as economic inequality and racial injustice by prioritizing historically disenfranchised communities such as the minority groups in terms of race, ability differences or class.

For the sake of clarity, this paper has a twofold structure. The first part concentrates on the most important biographical data, stating her most astonishing and outstanding aspects. The second delves on the most important legislation sponsored in Congress by Representative Ocasio-Cortez with a glance at her most relevant political issues and interests.

## 2. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who was born on October 13, 1989, in Bronx County, New York, belongs to a Catholic working-class Puerto Rican family, being the daughter of Blanca Ocasio-Cortez and Sergio Ocasio. She has a younger brother named Gabriel. Her father was born in the Bronx to a Puerto Rican family and became an architect, and her mother was born in Puerto Rico (Newman 2018). When she was appointed to the House of Representatives on January 3, 2019, she became the youngest Hispanic member in Congress, being this her first term in the chamber.

Throughout her childhood, Ocasio-Cortez divided her time between Bronx and Yorktown where she was raised. It was while visiting her extended family in the Bronx that she saw a stark contrast in opportunities based on their respective zip codes. She described her Puerto Rican community as an amalgamation in an article published in *The New York Times*: “We are black, we are indigenous, we are Spanish, we are European” (Goldmacher 2019).

She graduated from Yorktown High School in Yorktown Heights (New York) in 2007, coming in second on the microbiology category of the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair with a microbiology research project on the effect of antioxidants. In a show of appreciation for her scientific efforts, the MIT Lincoln Laboratory named a small asteroid after her (Mosher 2018). Besides, she also took part in the National Hispanic Institute’s Lorenzo de Zavala Youth Legislative Session. After this, she obtained a B.A. from Boston University in 2011, graduating *cum laude* with degrees in Economics and International Relations.

Following the financial crisis of 2008, tragedy struck her family. Her father, Sergio Ocasio-Cortez, passed away due to lung cancer forcing her family to sell their Westchester home. Ocasio-Cortez pulled extra shifts to work as a waitress and a bartender to support her family during this time, deepening so her commitment to issues impacting directly to working-class people. Ocasio-Cortez became involved in a lengthy probate battle to settle her father's estate. She later said that "the experience helped her learn firsthand how attorneys appointed by the court to administer an estate can enrich themselves at the expense of the families struggling to make sense of bureaucracy" (Scahill 2018).

During this period, she also had the opportunity to work as an intern in the office of the late Democrat Senator Ted Kennedy in the section of foreign affairs and immigration issues, which provided her with a first-hand view of the hardships the families endured after being separated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Upon this experience, she later recalled: "I was the only Spanish speaker and, as a result, as basically a kid, whenever a frantic call would come into the office, I was the one that had to pick up that phone. I was the one that had to help that person navigate that system" (Chavez 2018).

During the 2016 presidential election, she worked as a volunteer organizer for Bernie Sanders, one of the then candidates who sought to stand for nomination of the Democratic Party in the presidential elections of November 2016, in the South Bronx, expanding her skills in electoral organizing and activism. This led her to travel all around the country and to Dakota to get to know the problems of the indigenous communities, and then back to New York's 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District to commence her popular campaign for Congress.

On June 26, 2018, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez gained public recognition when she thoroughly defeated the 10-consecutive term congressman Joe Crowley, the fourth most powerful Democrat in the House in the State's Democratic primary and the Democratic Caucus Chair. She was the first person since 2004 to challenge Crowley in the primary. She also faced a financial gap between the campaigns saying that "you can't really beat big money with more money. You must beat them with a totally different game" (Leigh 2018: 77). Her campaign posters' designs were said to have been inspired by revolutionary posters and visuals from the past. Ocasio-Cortez received 57.13% of the vote (15,897 votes) to Joe Crowley's 42.5% (11,761 votes) defeating so the 10-term incumbent by almost 15% (Goldmacher & Martin 2018). Her win came as a shock to many political commentators and analysts and immediately garnered nationwide media attention. *Time Magazine* called her victory the biggest upset of the 2018 elections so far. Even *The Guardian* called it "one of the biggest upsets in recent American political history" (Jacobs 2018).

Ocasio-Cortez was the first opponent in the Democratic Party to challenge Crowley's seat in 14 years with the slogan "women like me aren't supposed to run for office" (Kneg 2018). And during her primary speech victory she stated, "This is not an end, this is the beginning because the message that we sent the world tonight is that it's not OK to put donors before your community" (Menta 2018).

After her victory in the primaries, on November 6, 2018, less than a month after her 29<sup>th</sup> birthday, Ocasio-Cortez went on to dispatch her Republican opponent, Anthony Pappas, to become the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. Pappas did not actively campaign since registered Democrats outnumbered Republicans by almost 6 to 1. The district has been in Democratic hands for all but 2 years since 1923 and without interruption since 1949 (Hicks 2018). Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez represents New York's 14<sup>th</sup> district, comprising more than 650,000 people across different parts of the Bronx and Queens. This district is one of the nation's most diverse districts and one of the fastest growing in the state of New York.

It was her first time running for office, and, as a Democratic Socialist of Puerto Rican descent, her stunning triumph was a boom to the progressive hopes of her liberal supporters. Ocasio-Cortez was endorsed by various activities and grassroots organizations and figures, including former president Barack Obama and U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders. She won the election with 78% of the vote to Pappa's 14%, and Crowley receiving 6.6%. Her election took part within a broader Democratic victory in the 2018 midterm elections, since the party gained control of the House by picking up 41 seats, being sworn in by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on January 3, 2019. When the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress convened, Ocasio-Cortez entered with no seniority but with a large social media presence, up to the point of being requested by her colleagues to teach them social media lessons upon her arrival.

Since then, Ocasio-Cortez has looked forward to serving working class people over corporate interests, advocating for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Since then, she has been noted for her substantial and constant social media presence relative to her fellow members of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. Ocasio-Cortez is also among the first Hispanic female members of the Democratic Socialists of America elected to serve in Congress (Issemman 2018). In her political programme, Representative Ocasio-Cortez advocates a progressive platform that includes Medicare for all, a federal jobs guarantee, a proposed Green New Deal (her milestone piece of legislation), abolishing the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, free public college and trade school, and a 70% marginal tax rate for incomes above \$10 million.

In the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, she has been assigned to the Financial Services and the Oversight and Reform Committees. In the former, the Financial Services Committee, Ocasio-Cortez is a member of the subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Financial Institutions, and the subcommittee on Investor Protection, Entrepreneurship and Capital Markets. In the latter, the Oversight and Reform Committee, she serves in the subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, and the subcommittee on Environment.

As a leading member of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, representative Ocasio-Cortez has fought for the needs of the Bronx and Queens, bringing New York 14<sup>th</sup> district's voice to Capitol Hill. She has advocated for a transparent, accountable, and fair government for all. And as a member of the Committee on Financial Services, Ocasio-Cortez advocated for community investment, long-term housing solutions, and consumer protection.

### **3. POLITICAL ISSUES AND INTERESTS: LEGISLATION SPONSORED BY OCASIO-CORTEZ**

According to Kullgren, the fact that representative Ocasio-Cortez fully embraces the democratic socialist label as part of her political identity is more than an opinion. Quite reasonably, this was also reflected in the political positions that she undertook in the House of Representatives. Consequently, in an interview granted to NBC, she described her democratic socialism as “part of what I am. It's not all of what I am. And I think that's a very important distinction” (Kullgren 2019).

In the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, Ocasio-Cortez has been quite active sponsoring bills in the chamber. Along the year 2020, she had already sponsored 11 bills in the House, which clearly manifests her varied political issues developed. Among those, we can highlight the following: environment (as her most important issue), housing, a just society, economic inequality, immigration, healthcare, or criminal justice reform.

For the sake of clarity, in this section we will firstly concentrate on those bills sponsored by Ocasio-Cortez and which were closely related to those issues referred before. Out of those 11 bills sponsored by her in the chamber, the milestone measures, and the ones for which she has gained public recognition and notoriety nationwide, are curiously the first and last bill that she introduced in the House, which were related to environmental issues and a Green New Deal. Upon this environmental issue, Ocasio-Cortez introduced 2 bills: “House Resolution 109” (the first bill to be introduced), and “HR 5857” (the last one).



On February 7, 2019, Ocasio-Cortez submitted her first piece of legislation, the so-called Green New Deal by means of House Resolution 109, whose official title was “Recognising the duty of the Federal government to create a Green New Deal”. This bill was referred to the House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources and got the status of “Introduced”.

Both congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez and senator Markey published a joint non-binding resolution striking out the main elements of a 10-year economic mobilization that would phase out fossil fuel use and renovate the nation’s infrastructures. This plan called for implementing the social cost of carbon that was part of the Obama administration plans to address climate change. It also aimed to create jobs and boost the economy in the process. The importance of such bill was also reflected on the great number of cosponsors it had, 98, which clearly demonstrates the massive support she got on this issue from her democratic colleagues (DePillis 2019).

Likewise, she has called for more environmental concern in Congress, describing climate change as “the single biggest national security threat to worldwide industrialized civilization” (Bowden 2019). Ocasio-Cortez’s environmental plan advocates for the U.S. to transition to an electrical grid running on 100% renewable energy and to end the use of fossil fuels with 10 years. These changes, estimated to cost roughly \$2.5 trillion per year, would be financed in part by applying higher taxes on the wealthy, a measure unpopular among Republicans.

Different activist groups such as Greenpeace or the Sunrise Movement voted in favour of the plan, as well as some Democratic senators such as Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, or Cory Booker, but no Republican lawmakers voiced any support. And inconceivably, even some other Democrats, such as senator Dianne Feinstein or the House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, dismissed the proposal (Meyer 2019).

It is also outstanding House Resolution 109 for being the resolution which held the greatest number of cosponsors in the chamber, with a total of 98 Democratic representatives, due to its huge impact and nationwide significance since it recognised that it was the duty of the Federal Government to create such a deal. But what is even more remarkable is the number of Hispanic members that backed her up in this resolution, especially at the time of the resolution to be introduced: 20, almost one sixth of the total, and belonging to many different states, although the state of California with 9 representatives is the most represented. This clearly puts forward the importance awarded by the Hispanic members in Congress to such an initiative by Ocasio-Cortez.

The last measure introduced by Ocasio-Cortez in the chamber, and which was also related to environmental issues, is HR 5857, officially named Fracking Ban Act. This bill was referred

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to the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee on February 12, 2020, and has only had 5 cosponsors insofar, of whom 3 were Democratic representatives from Hispanic origin: Darren Soto (Florida), Nanette Diaz Barragan (California) and Raul Grijalva (Arizona), representing states also concerned with this fracking issue which prohibited fracking on onshore and offshore land by the year 2025. This small number of cosponsors may well be explained by the lack of time that this bill has had in the legislative runout in the House. This last bill was directed towards the banning of hydraulic fracturing in the United States since the chemicals injected into the ground during the hydraulic fracturing process included acids, detergents, and toxic chemicals that put drinking water at risk.

The second political issue of interest, and partly related to the previous one, was that of housing. Representative Ocasio-Cortez believes that every human being has the right to housing that is safe, sanitary, and secure. For this reason, she is fighting to advanced housing policies that would address the needs of every citizen. Consequently, Ocasio-Cortez supports extending tax benefits to working and middle- class homeowners. And this was reflected in the 3 different bills that she introduced in the house: “HR 3685”, “HR 5072”, and “HR 5185”.

Just starting off with the first of these 3, HR 3685 was introduced on July 10, 2019, officially known as the Fair Chance at Housing Act of 2018. This bill, which was referred to the House Committee on Financial Services, has the status of “Introduced”<sup>4</sup>, and got the support of 11 cosponsors in the chamber. Curiously, out of these 11 Democratic cosponsors, only 2 of them were of Hispanic origin: Jesus G. Garcia (Illinois) and Raul M. Grijalva (Arizona), which might denote a scarce support among her Hispanic counterparts.

The objective of HR 3685 was to reform the screening and eviction policies for Federal housing assistance to provide fair access to housing. In its provisions, it aimed at amending Section 579 of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. And quite incidentally, this bill is one of the longest resolutions introduced by Ocasio-Cortez in the chamber, comprising 12 sections along its 41 pages of provisions.

The next bill was HR 5072, officially named A Just Society: A Place to Prosper Act of 2019, introduced by Ocasio-Cortez on November 13, 2019, and which was referred to the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. That this measure did not obtain a lot of support was clearly demonstrated on the scarce number of cosponsors

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<sup>4</sup> A bill is introduced when the bill sponsor formally submits it for consideration by their chamber. Once the bill is introduced, it can then be assigned to the appropriate committee.

that it had in the chamber, with just 4 of them: Grace Meng (New York), Rashida Tlaib (Minnesota), Barbara Lee (California), and the Hispanic representative Jesus C. Garcia (Illinois). The purpose of this bill was to create an equitable and stable rental housing market to regulate the obligations of landlords and to prohibit discrimination based on source of income.

And the third and last bill on this housing issue, and closely related to the first issue of interest, was HR 5185, officially named Green New Deal for Public Housing Act. This measure was referred to the House Committee on Financial Services and got the status of “Introduced” in the chamber.

The relevance of such bill is also seen in the number of Democratic cosponsors it had, 22, the second highest number of all the measured introduced by Ocasio-Cortez in the House. Incidentally, only 1 out of these 22 was a Hispanic representative, Adriano Espaillat, also from the same state as her (New York), which may well prove that the Hispanic members were not quite interested in this initiative since she did not get their support in the chamber. The reason for this scarce support may be justified by the view that Ocasio-Cortez was mainly pursuing policies that were directed to specifically meet the needs of her constituents.

The objective of HR 5185 was to provide economic empowerment opportunities on the United States through the modernization of public housing, and whose purpose was to stimulate, gather, and develop the workforce capacity, tools, financing, and material needed to rehabilitate, upgrade, and modernize public housing.

Another political issue that trapped her interest was that of her pursuit of a more just society by means of the introduction of 2 other bills in the House: “HR 2930”, and “HR 5073”. Representative Ocasio-Cortez believes that a just society should be built to protect communities and uplift neighbours against economic inequality.

It is for that reason that Ocasio-Cortez introduced these 2 bills in the so that economic injustice could be reduced. In her own words, “a just society should aim to ensure that we are on a path towards shared prosperity for all, providing a living wage, safe working conditions and healthcare, and acknowledging the value of immigrants to our communities” (Inskeep 2019).

The second bill introduced by Ocasio-Cortez in the chamber, chronologically speaking, was HR 2930 on May 22, 2019. This bill, whose official name was Loan Shark Prevention Act, was referred to the House Committee on Financial Services, and got the status of “Introduced”. This measure held the support of 9 Democratic representatives who cosponsored the initiative, being 2 of them of Hispanic origin and from the same state: Nydia Velazquez and Jose E. **Artículos. Miscelánea | *Raudem, Revista de Estudios de las Mujeres*. Vol. 10, 2022. 36**  
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Serrano (New York). It is also relevant to note down that the latter, Jose E. Serrano, only quite recently gave his support to this bill, on February 6, 2020, whilst the rest of cosponsors did so on the same day it was introduced in the chamber. The goal was to protect consumers from usury with a reduction in the interest rate as established in Section 107 of the Truth in Lending Act.

The other bill related to this issue was HR 5073, whose official name was A Just Society: The Uplift Our Workers Act, introduced by Ocasio-Cortez on November 13, 2019. It was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform and to the Committee on Education and Labour and got the status of “Introduced”.

This measure only got the support of 6 Democratic representatives who cosponsored it in the chamber: Grace Meng (New York), Rashida Tlaib (Minnesota), Barbara Lee (California), and 3 Hispanic members, Sylvia Garcia (Texas), Grace F. Napolitano (California), and Jesus C. Garcia (Illinois). Once again, the support of the Hispanic counterparts to the initiative put forward by Ocasio-Cortez was rather scarce. The goal was to require a score of worker-friendliness of each employer before entering a federal contract and to establish a contracting preference for such score.

Closely related to this topic was the next issue of interest for Ocasio-Cortez, economic inequality. In this sense, she is fighting to improve the living conditions in what is supposed to be a modern, moral, and wealthy society by means of “House Resolution 666”. Ocasio-Cortez supports a wealth tax, union rights, and pay equity.

House Resolution 666 was introduced on October 30, 2019, under the long official name of Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives on the ratification of the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, being referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and getting the status of “Introduced”. This measure was directed towards the correction of economic inequality in the US. This short bill in its provisions recognised that despite being the US one of the world’s wealthiest countries, it ranked 35 out of 37 countries in terms of poverty and inequality with more than 40 million people living in poverty. But, despite its social significance, it only got the support of 5 cosponsors in the chamber, being 2 of them of Hispanic origin: Grace Meng (New York), Rashida Tlaib (Minnesota), Barbara Lee (California), and the Hispanic counterparts Grace Napolitano (California) and Jesus C. Garcia (Illinois).

As it could be expected, immigration was another issue of interest for representative Ocasio-Cortez by enacting “HR 5071”. She believes that the US diversity is the greatest strength of the country, being thus committed to a transformative, empathetic, and just

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immigration reform. This bill would provide a pathway to citizenship to undocumented immigrants who were brought to the US as children and many immigrants with temporary humanitarian protections.

HR 5071, which was introduced on November 13, 2019, and whose official name was “A Just Society: The Embrace Act”, was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform and got the status of “Introduced”. This bill was only held by 5 cosponsors in the chamber but, curiously, only 2 of these 5 were Hispanic despite being this a matter of interest to them all: Sylvia Garcia (Texas) and Jesus C. Garcia (Illinois). The other 3 Democratic representatives were again Grace Meng (New York), Rashida Tlaib (Minnesota), and Barbara Lee (California). The objective of this resolution was to provide access to federal public benefits for aliens, without regard to the immigration status of that alien.

The last but one issue which attracted the interest of representative Ocasio-Cortez was that of healthcare with the introduction of “HR 5069”. She supports transitioning to a single-payer health-care system, viewing medical care as a human right contrary to the Republican views. Her campaign website stated: “Almost every other developed nation in the world has universal healthcare. It’s time the United States catch up to the rest of the world in ensuring all people have real healthcare coverage that doesn’t break the bank” (Haltiwanger 2018).

HR 5069, officially named The Recognizing Poverty Act, was introduced by Ocasio-Cortez on November 13, 2019, and referred to the House Committee on Education and Labour, getting the status of “Introduced”. This bill was also cosponsored by 11 Democratic representatives, out of whom 3 were of Hispanic origin: Sylvia Garcia (Texas), Grace F. Napolitano (California) and Jesus C. Garcia (Illinois). This number of cosponsors clearly demonstrates the importance awarded to this initiative among the Democratic ranks. The objective of this bill was to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop for consideration of the Congress a poverty line for purpose of the Community Services Block Grant Act. It was oriented directly to assess the adequacy of the poverty line on a measure of the resources that families needed to afford basic goods and services.

And finally, the last issue of interest for Ocasio-Cortez was her pursuit of a criminal justice reform by means of the enactment of “HR 5070”. She is determined to dismantle the system of mass incarceration and to end the school-to-prison pipeline. This measure only got the support of 5 cosponsors in the chamber: Grace Meng (New York), Lacy Clay (Montana), Rashida Tlaib (Minnesota), Barbara Lee (California), and the Hispanic member Jesus C. Garcia (Illinois).

HR 5070 was introduced on November 13, 2019, under the official name of A Just Society: The Mercy in Re-Entry Act, being referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform and getting the status of “Introduced”. The goal of this bill was to provide access to federal public benefits for individuals with criminal convictions. She heavily supports ending for-profit prisons, the release of individuals incarcerated for non-violent drug offences, the end of cash bail, and independent investigations for any and every time any individual is killed by law enforcement.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The 116<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress has the largest Hispanic representation in its history, with a total of 48 members between both Houses, 44 of them in the House of Representatives, where 37 members belong to the Democratic Party vs. 7 belonging to the Republican Party, for only 4 in the Senate, 2 belonging to each party. Out of these 48 members, 15 are women, 14 of them in the House and a single Hispanic woman in the Senate.

According to the previously detailed information, we have specifically focused this paper on the figure of representative Ocasio-Cortez, a third generation Bronxite, educator, and organiser serving the 14th district of New York in the Bronx and Queens. She grew up experiencing the reality of New York’s rising income inequality, inspiring her to organise her community and run for office on a progressive platform.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is an U.S. Democratic Socialist who made headlines back in the year 2018 by beating a 10-term New York Democrat incumbent in a congressional primary before becoming the youngest woman ever elected to Congress. As an active member, she ran on a progressive platform to abolish ICE and pushing for criminal justice reform, tuition-free college, and universal healthcare, among other important issues.

But Ocasio-Cortez’s milestone piece of legislation came in February 2019 when she and Senator Ed Markey introduced a resolution outlining the scope of a Green New Deal for the U.S. This resolution proposed the switch to renewable energy sources for the entire country with the goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Additionally, the plan called for major investments in clean energy technology, research, and development, with Ocasio-Cortez also aiming to include a federal jobs guarantee, basic income, and universal health care.

On a general basis, we can draw two main conclusions from Ocasio-Cortez’s different political issues and the 11 bills introduced by her in the House. The first one is that she covers



up quite a different range of action in the legislative runaway. And the second one is that all these bills got a certain degree of support by means of many cosponsors, mostly from her own party, and from the rest of the Hispanic members in the chamber.

Ocasio-Cortez has obtained the support of 22 different Hispanic representatives in the House for the 11 bills which she has introduced so far. And within them, there are 2 who stand out for their firm and repetitive support to the different initiatives sponsored by her, Jesus C. Garcia (8) and Grace F. Napolitano (4), despite being from different states to Ocasio-Cortez's. But both cosponsored her in her Green New Deal program, her keystone measure.

Finally, regarding the countless number of bills which Ocasio-Cortez cosponsored in the House, they also correspond to a wide scope of political issues and interests, though mainly they coincide with those of the bills she introduced in the chamber. Obviously, the number of representatives introducing these 383 bills, regardless their status in the House, which she cosponsored is too huge to make a proper reflection here. However, what is important to note down is that she also cosponsored back a total of 21 Hispanic representatives, being the most cosponsored Nydia Velazquez from New York (10 times), and Raul Grijalva from Arizona and Adriano Espaillat from New York (5 times).

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