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**President & CEO of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Board Member of the United States - Spain Council.**

Ramiro Cavazos is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC). Previously, he served as the President & CEO of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for 10 years. With his expertise in economic development, he has served as the Director of Economic Development for the City of San Antonio, Director of Research and Economic Development for the UT Health Science Center, and as the Global Public Affairs Manager for the Levi Strauss Company and Foundation for the Texas, Mexico, and Latin America region.

Ramiro has a Master of Public Administration from St. Mary's University and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Government from The University of Texas at Austin. A native of Weslaco in the Rio Grande Valley, he is a 7th generation Texan.

# The American Brief

SECOND EDITION

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Designed and launched by the Fundación Consejo España - EE.UU., **The American Brief** releases a monthly series of transcribed interviews on current topics to American personalities from politics, business, culture and academics.

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**The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) is the largest Hispanic business organization in the United States, representing over 4.7 million Hispanic-owned businesses. What is the USHCC mission and commitment?**

Our mission is to build wealth through an ecosystem to accelerate Hispanic business growth and prosperity. Our vision at the USHCC is to be the leading voice to advance Hispanic business potential to drive our American economy. To this end, we have focused our advocacy on behalf of our Hispanic-owned businesses, Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, and Corporate Partner Members guided by our “Three C’s”:

- **Capital** – Expanding equitable access to capital through traditional and innovative partnerships,
- **Capacity** – Building capacity through programming, training, and new grant investments, and
- **Connections** – Establishing connections through matchmaking, procurement, and advocacy.

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**How significant is the contribution of Hispanic businesses to the growth and prosperity of the U.S. economy?**

Hispanic-owned businesses contribute over \$800 billion to the American economy every year through job creation, investment, spending, and trade throughout America, leveraging more opportunities.

**How healthy are commercial and trade relationships between the U.S. and Spain? What is the role of the Hispanic business network on the strengthening of these relations?**

Very healthy. To date, there are more than 150 Spanish companies that are fully operational in the United States. These include businesses in the infrastructure, transportation, commercialization, and trade services industries. The Hispanic business community is critical to how these Spanish entities contribute to American supply chains, invest in the U.S. workforce, and help revitalize the American economy after the global pandemic. It is the intent of the USHCC to continue to foster strong business relationships in Spain and eventually begin to organize economic development trade missions



in order to bridge more business opportunities between both countries. We understand, firsthand, the abilities that Spanish-owned businesses have to contribute to the needs of innovation and business expansion in America. We aim to conduct this relationship building in a culturally competent manner, while ensuring economic prosperity for all parties involved at multiple levels in both international markets.

**Prime Minister of Spain, Pedro Sánchez, traveled last July to the U.S. on an economic and investment-focused tour to attract financial support. Previously, the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, Reyes Maroto, met with U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Gina Raimondo, to strengthen ties of collaboration**



**and lay the basis for a new trade relationship between both Administrations. How do you value these efforts carried out by the Spanish Government and its reception from the U.S. Government?**

Spain is one of the strongest allies that the United States of America has in the world. The USHCC commends these long-standing efforts by both governments to continue the evolution and expansion of trade and business creation between our countries. Given recent legislative action by the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Commerce stands in a unique position to be able to expand programming and technical assistance to international businesses and/or institutional entities that have a vested interest in doing business with American companies in U.S. territories.

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**How can Spanish and Hispanic-owned companies cooperate to foster mutual investment? What is the role of the Chambers of Commerce to encourage this cooperation?**

The role of Chambers of Commerce is to define companies in both, the U.S. and Spain, who can use each other's products, services, or commodities. Furthermore, Chambers in both countries will share concrete solutions to build and expand dialogue to improve collaboration between their respective business members. This dialogue would allow for businesses in both countries to scale or give them the ability to find new clients and consumers in a supportive environment.

**The Hispanic community has been hit hard by COVID-19 pandemic. How is the community coming through the dramatic effects of this unprecedented crisis?**

Both countries have a sincere and genuine commitment to put the impact of COVID-19 behind us. Efforts by the U.S. Government continue to unfold to make sure that the Hispanic community is fully vaccinated and has

access to proper healthcare. From an economic perspective, relief legislation has extremely assisted the ability of Hispanic families and businesses to maintain their individual economic vitality and financial security.

**In your opinion, is the American Rescue Plan (ARP) approved by the Congress in March 2021 an effective enough measure to stimulate the recovery of the U.S. economy? Does it provide for specific amounts to help minorities especially devastated by the COVID-19 crisis?**

The ARP was a great measure taken by the U.S. Government to ensure that families and businesses had the resources they needed to bounce back after the COVID-19 crisis. Some of the provisions within the ARP were vital for the

most affected communities and we applaud the bipartisan efforts made by our legislators to come to a middle ground to revitalize our country.

**Moreover, a vast infrastructure program of \$1 billion has been presented in the Senate while there are plans for a so called “social infrastructure” program of \$3.5 billion. What is the USHCC assessment on them?**

Our country is in great need to modernize our infrastructure. The ambitious efforts made by Congressmen and women speak to what we strive for as a nation. The USHCC supports investing in America’s infrastructure while providing equitable opportunities to all businesses, big and small, to compete for federal contracts.



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**The National Hispanic Heritage Month is held every year from September 15 to October 15 since 1988 to celebrate the history, the culture and the accomplishments of Hispanic Americans. How important is this celebration in 2021?**

This year and every year, we celebrate our Spanish heritage, which is part of our American culture, and above all else, the opportunity that stands before us to become the main driver of the American economy. The 2020 Census data clearly shows how the Hispanic community is growing at an unparalleled rate. We are starting more businesses, creating more jobs, and contributing more to the American economy than ever before. Hispanics in America represent the future economic engine of commerce for our great nations to partner for many years to come. This is our time!

**The Cervantes Institute of Spain recently opened in El Paso, TX, an extension of its center in Albuquerque, and it is expected the opening of a new office in Los Angeles, CA. In a conference at UCLA, PM Pedro Sánchez said that «the new Cervantes Institute in Los Angeles aims to become**

**a true House for Hispanics and the Hispanic in California». How have these initiatives been received locally?**

The Spanish language is a tool for business that The Cervantes Institute has invested in around the world for many years. The Cervantes Institute remains as an educational stable for individuals who want to expand their knowledge in Castilian Spanish. We firmly believe that the expansion of this linguistic initiative is critical to educating more individuals about our linguistic roots, our culture, and how Hispanic Americans can assist in evolving the Spanish language in the U.S. and around the world. Dr. Alfonso Chiscano Díaz was a pioneer and advocate in bringing the Cervantes Institute to American cities, his legacy is dependent on growing the Cervantes network in the U.S. and making sure that its mission is felt by all of those who want to grow their intellectual understanding of our language and what it represents to the evolution of education, society, and international business. The USHCC remains committed to working with the Fundación Consejo España – EE.UU. to ensure that the Cervantes mission in the U.S. is expanded and is sustained.

**What is your take on President Biden’s nomination of Julissa Reynoso as U.S. Ambassador to Spain?**

“It is critical that women, especially Latinas, ascend into diplomatic positions of power around the world.

The USHCC is extremely pleased with President Biden’s nomination of Julissa Reynoso to serve as Ambassador of the United States to Spain. Now more than ever, it is critical that women, especially Latinas, ascend into diplomatic positions of power around the world and define their rightful place at decision-making tables where, historically, only men were present. Ambassador Reynoso and her individual professional identity will not only allow for Spain and the U.S. to have a stronger relationship, but it will also resemble a representation of diplomatic power for other women and Latinas who will serve in the future. We very much look forward to working with Ambassador Reynoso and the Biden Administration to expand these types of diplomatic appointments throughout the world which have direct effects on international business, our diplomatic posture, and our overall influence in global affairs.

