

## **CHCI TO HONOR DR. ELLEN OCHOA & ROBERT RODRIGUEZ AT THE 42ND ANNUAL AWARDS GALA**

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**Washington, D.C.** – The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) and CHCI Chair, Congressman Ruben Gallego, are proud to announce the 2019 Medallion of Excellence Honorees, Dr. Ellen Ochoa and Robert Rodriguez. These exemplary leaders will be recognized during the CHCI 42nd Annual Awards Gala, September 19, 2019, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

The Medallion of Excellence Award is CHCI's highest accolade and one of the most prestigious honors in the Latino community bestowed annually upon individuals who are positive Hispanic American role models and whose extraordinary careers, civic leadership, and service contribute to the greater American society.

“One of the most celebrated visionaries in film and entertainment, Robert Rodriguez has redefined the industry with his boundless creativity, innovative storytelling, and constant strive for Latino representation,” said Rep. Gallego. “Similarly, as the first Hispanic woman to go to space and former director of the Johnson Space Center, Dr. Ellen Ochoa has paved the way for young Latinas and Latinos to follow their biggest aspirations. Both of these individuals, through their legacy of work and commitment to the Latino community, embody CHCI's core principles and we are proud to celebrate and recognize them at our 42nd Annual Awards Gala this year.”

“We are proud to honor Robert Rodriguez and Dr. Ellen Ochoa for their dedication to equality, diversity, social justice, and embodiment of the American dream for all. We celebrate their visionary leadership and extraordinary careers that serve as catalysts for future generations to follow,” said Marco A. Davis, CHCI President and CEO.

**The 2019 CHCI American Dream Medallion of Excellence in Education, Science, Medicine, or Civil Rights will be awarded to Dr. Ellen Ochoa.**

For over 30 years, Dr. Ellen Ochoa has dedicated her life's work to being a research engineer, astronaut and leader, making history and helping lay the foundation for students in STEM and higher education.

In 1993, Dr. Ochoa became the first Hispanic-American female astronaut and, in 2013, she became the second female and first Hispanic director of NASA's Johnson Space Center. Dr. Ochoa has been recognized with numerous accolades including NASA's highest award, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Presidential Distinguished Rank Award for senior executives in the federal government, and has six schools named for her. She serves on several boards and chairs the Nomination Evaluation Committee for the National Medal of Technology and Innovation. She continues to support and advocate for the advancement of women and underrepresented minorities in professional, academic and civic spaces.