

Sylvana Rincon  
September 29, 2020  
ENG1121  
Unit 1 Writing Assignment  
Word Count:1125

Dear Mrs. Ocasio-Cortez,

I have been moved to write to you because I have seen the great work you have accomplished and continue doing with the Latino community, people of colors and women. I have seen how driven you are to fight for people's rights, and it is just; how you come to defense of the minorities of this country.

We know how difficult life has been for women, equality has not come easy to us. And because of this, within in time, women like you have come out to fight for our rights and speak up for all of us. Therefore, I know that I will have your attention and your help in this matter. Gender inequality in the construction industry is just a consequence of many years of oppression towards women. It is the consequence of stereotypes that tells society how woman should behave, how weak or strong women are, what a woman is capable of, and their role in the household. Gender inequality comes from things like girls being encouraged to play with dolls while boys play with cars or building tools. Which might look insignificant however, most likely the kid will be helping around the house fixing things and gaining experience, turning the adult man in someone proficient in the use of tools and building material, while the girl has not had the same experience. These stereotypes leave women in disadvantage.

It is not a secret that even in these times, gender equality is still a dream and not a complete reality; and the construction industry is not the exception. Men still underestimate us and consider us less capable. To this date, women still receive discriminative comments; there is still a wage gap between men and woman; there is still a substantial difference in the number of women in this industry compared to men; and there is also a minute amount of women in executive positions within the industry. I work in the construction industry and I have experienced discrimination, I have received comments such as "hey! do you know what you are doing". I have received stare from men when I walk into a new jobsite. I come from a male chauvinist culture where females are still expected to assume the role of the housewife, where construction is still looked at as a "men's job". When I came to this country, I thought it would be different but, even here I have felt inferior and insecure at times because of stereotypes. I remember the second jobsite I went to for a coordination meeting, there was an old man that kept staring at me and kept asking me questions trying to test me, and since English is not my first language I started getting very nervous and I wasn't understanding some of the questions he asked me; at the end of the meeting he asked me "Are you sure you want to be out at the jobsites". I have to admit it, I came out of that meeting devastated, I felt worthless. I am pretty sure this is how many women have felt and still feel in this industry.

Statistics show that in 2018 out of 10,692,000 workers in construction, only 1,106,919 were women, and only 1.5 percent of the entire workforce in the United States. Of the occupation sectors, only a 1% of women work in the construction sector. To visualize even more, in a job site, there is only ONE female for every 100 employees. Although, the number of women in the construction field continues to increase throughout the years and expected to continue to increase, there is a lot more to be done. Moreover, only a 3% of companies have females in construction management position. In the company I work for, I started working at the same time as two male coworkers and one female as an Assistant Project Manager, while within two or three weeks my male coworkers were sent to the jobsite, my female coworker and I were in the office pushing paperwork. After a couple of months, the two male assistants were promoted to Project Manager. My female coworker and I had to work harder to be able to be given the opportunity, and only after a year and half we were promoted to Project managers. Us women need equity; we need a system that is fair and impartial.

In July 15, 2020 The US Small Business Administration made changes to the process of certification for Woman-Owned businesses, making it easier for small business to have access to the WOSB Federal contracting. The benefit of this program is to help level the competition to WOSB in some contracts. Moreover, Massachusetts was the first state to pass an equal pay law in 1945; in July 1, 2018 the equal pay law was updated, this law clarifies what is considered unlawful wage discrimination. Thus, the changes done to help women, there is much work remain to better the conditions for woman in construction. Now I would like to layout some of the things that might help achieve equity in a faster manner. First, it must start with our city governors, by forcing companies to hire women and level out their workforce. Also, making mandatory for companies to work with other women own subcontractors or vendors in the private sector. Additionally, The Office of Federal Programs which has under its jurisdiction approximately 17 percent of the federal contracts, should enforce the Executive Order 11246 that calls for nondiscrimination in employment by contractor and subcontractors. Likewise, the OFCCP should demand contractor to have a plan and follow it, stating how they will improve their number of female employees. Also, provide accessible training and education in the various trades to women. Lastly, encourage female high school students to pursue careers in engineering degrees or building trades during Higher Education open houses.

As New York City being one of the leaders of the construction industry in the country, and Queens' supplying nearly half of the workforce of the city. I believe it is imperative to start this change in the most diverse community "Queens, NY", where I proudly live in and represent. I seek for your help in this matter as you represent in Congress the New York's 14<sup>th</sup> District and your history in advocating for minorities in our district. I write to you because you have also been a victim of gender discrimination and you have stood up to it. Because your bravery to speak about the discriminative and disrespectful words used by representative Yoho assure me that you will not stay quite before the injustices toward the woman in the construction industry.

Sincerely,  
Sylvana Rincon