



State of Connecticut

Latino and Puerto Rican

Affairs Commission

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Testimony of Fernando Betancourt
Government Administration and Elections Committee (GAE)
Regarding Committee H.B. 5321 (Raised)
“An Act Establishing an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission”
Wednesday, February 20, 2008, L.O.B. Hartford, Connecticut

Good morning co-chairs Slossberg, Caruso and honorable members of the GAE committee. For the record, my name is Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director for the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). I am here on behalf of the LPRAC to testify in support of House Bill Number 5321, “An Act Establishing an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission.”

It gives me great pleasure to support the creation of the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission. The passage of this legislation would allow lawmakers to have access to one more decision-making tool that may help shape a lawmakers understanding of the impact of a legislative proposal before enacting legislation in the State. Thus far a lawmaker receives information about a legislative proposal via public testimony, the office of fiscal analysis, the office of legislative research, and perhaps via a non-partisan public policy agency such as The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Children, the African-American Affairs Commission and the LPRAC on myriad of different topics. Your support for H.B. 5321 would provide you with unique pertinent information regarding the Asian community living in the State of Connecticut.

The LPRAC can positively attest to the importance of such a legislative entity based on the unique data currently being released by this office, including our Latino Socio-Economic trends study, and information provided to several legislative committees at the invitation of legislators on a broad range of policy issues that have included housing, immigration, education, transportation, and economic development just to mention a few areas covered since our start in 1995.

For the record, the projected population growth for the Asian population at the national level indicates that by the year 2050 the percent of the total population for the Asian and other Pacific Islanders would be triple the current percentages (i.e., 3.3%). The White population, for comparison purposes, is projected to decline by the year 2050 from 81% down to 72% during the same period. More interesting is that the Asian population is the fastest growing segment with the largest household income than any other racial or ethnic group including White Anglo-Saxon population. While there is no data in Connecticut that shows some possible reasons for the increasing income growth for this population, it seems logical to support the passage of this Commission to begin to understand some of these factors with the endeavor to improve the status of living of all.

The LPRAC was created by the Legislature of the State of Connecticut through Public Act No. 94-152, taking effect February 1, 1995. LPRAC is part of the Legislative Branch and governed by Section 2-120 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The LPRAC is mandated to review and comment on any proposed state legislation that would affect the Latino population in the state.