

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



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Contact: Marta Collazo
(860) 240-8637

HISPANIC LAWMAKERS & COMMUNITY LEADERS HOST FIRST LATINO ADVOCACY DAY AT STATE CAPITOL

Group challenges lack of state funding

State Representatives **Andres Ayala** (D-Bridgeport), **David Aldarondo** (D-Waterbury), **Juan Candelaria** (D-New Haven), **Minnie Gonzalez** (D-Hartford), **Hector Robles** (D-Hartford), **Jason Rojas** (D-East Hartford), **Kelvin Roldan** (D-Hartford) and **Ezequiel Santiago** (D-Bridgeport), together with the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, CAUSA and a coalition of statewide Hispanic agencies held a press conference today to raise serious concerns about the lack of funding to Latino based service agencies across the state and to launch the first Latino Advocacy Day at the State Capitol.

"We understand the challenges that we face during one of the toughest economic times in recent history," **Rep. Ayala** said. "However, Hispanic agencies have been facing this same crisis for years and years having to do more with less even when the economy was booming due to disproportionate lack of funding for Hispanic programs across the state."

"Unfortunately, the state is now getting an idea of what everyday life is like in many Latino communities in Connecticut," said **Lina Lorenzi**, Esq., Acting Director of the State of Connecticut Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. "Many of our most vulnerable citizens live in a constant state of economic recession and hardship. Cutting the little funding given to the agencies that serve them is unconscionable, especially in this time of crisis."

"CAUSA is the largest network of front line poverty agencies in the state – we serve so many with so little already and now it's a shocking '0' dollars in the state budget on that line for the Hispanic Human Resource Development line item, said **Carmen Sierra**, CAUSA's Executive Director. "A major hole will be ripped in an already precarious social safety net if this dedicated funding source is not restored."

The first Latino Advocacy Day at the State Capitol is the result of a series of meetings held between state legislators, community service agencies, small business owners and the Hispanic media who were looking for alternatives to the existing lack of resources within the Latino community. Today's agenda includes meetings with legislative leaders, state agency representatives and lawmakers.