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**Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission Releases
Comprehensive Study on the Status of Latinos**

**State's Latino Residents Express Deep Concern over Taxes, the Cost of
Health Insurance and Poor Education in Schools.**

(Hartford, Conn. March 26, 2008) — Before a room full of community leaders and concerned members of the public, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) Executive Director Fernando Betancourt today announced the findings of the Commission's fourth and most comprehensive Socio-Economic Study.

Gathered through surveys of 800 adult Latino residents, 200 Hispanic leaders, three focus groups and 50 in-person interviews with Latino youth, the study details the needs of their communities and the challenges they face regarding quality of life, health care, housing, education, employment and the judicial system.

"The Commission is gravely concerned about the future of its constituent communities," said Betancourt. "This study clearly confirms the rapid erosion of the socio-economic status of Latinos in the state."

Key findings of the research include:

- Latino adults reporting that their quality of life is better today than just two years ago have declined from 56.4 percent in 2002 to 33.4 percent in 2007.
- The percentage of Latino residents who believe housing is affordable dropped significantly from 74.5 percent in 2002 to 51.5 percent in 2007.
- Thirteen percent of respondents currently work two jobs. That figure is nearly double the 7.5 percent that reported working multiple jobs in 2002.
- Although 89 percent of Latinos surveyed reported having a primary care physician, 18.4 percent indicated that there was a time in the previous 12 months when they needed medication but could not afford to purchase it.
- Respondents currently utilizing the HUSKY Program gave the health care plan positive marks at a rate of 85.5 percent.
- Latinas reporting having a mammogram within the last two years rose impressively from 47.8 percent in 2002 to 69.1 percent in 2007.



- Computer familiarity among Latinos rose from 75 percent to 78.6 percent, making them one of the most computer literate segments of the population.

The LPRAC will work with legislative leaders, many of whom have expressed their dismay, to impact the issues voiced by the Latino people of Connecticut.

“We must look for ways to improve the standard of living of those in the Latino Community,” said Senate President Pro Tempore Donald E. Williams (D – 29th Senate District). “This is especially true in terms of health care, education, and employment. This past legislative session we were successful in increasing the Medicaid reimbursement rates, which will improve access to health care and begin to address the health care disparity for thousand of Latinos in Connecticut. Clearly, more must be done to close the achievement gap, grow jobs, and make affordable health care available to all residents of Connecticut. “

“The report highlights a very disturbing trend that is compounded by an uncertain economy," said Speaker of the House Jim Amann (D- 118th District, Milford). "In the area of healthcare for example, we know that the majority of the children lacking health insurance in Connecticut are Hispanic and that is why it is critical that the state properly market a program such as HUSKY in the Hispanic community where the most need exists.”

“I am delighted that the LPRAC is releasing the socio-economic status report of Latinos in Connecticut,” said State Representative Felipe Reinoso (D - 130th District, Bridgeport). “However, I am very concerned that there continues to be a significant number of indications that people in our five largest cities continue experiencing a declining standard of living. I hope that this information allows key lawmakers to realize the potential social and economic costs of inaction, especially since many experts project that half of the labor force in our main cities will be minority in the near future.”

“Lost are the days of positive growth,” added Betancourt. “The declining economy is only adding to the burden of working families, forcing many of them to work multiple jobs to keep their heads above water. When combined with inadequate health coverage and unattainable educational opportunities, lack of action on our part now, could lead to a crisis in the very near future. This crisis can only be avoided if the Governor and legislative leaders react through policy that bears clear and tangible change.”

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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. Section 2-120 of the Connecticut General Statutes governs LPRAC.