



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Testimony of Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission before the Government Administration and Elections Committee Regarding Committee Bill No. 6002
“An Act Establishing an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission”
Friday, March 16th, 2007 ~ 11:00 A.M.
Legislative Office Building, Room 2C
Hartford, Connecticut

Good morning co-chairs Slossberg, Caruso and honorable members of the Higher Education Committee. For the record, my name is Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director for the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. I am here to testify in support of Committee Bill No. 6002, “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 as recommended by State Representatives Tong, Reynolds, Olson, McCluskey, Malone, Bartlett, and Fontana and recently by State Senator Jonathan Harris. According to the latest information released by the U.S. Census Bureau the Asian community and other Pacific Islander community in the state reached 3.3 percent of the total population in Connecticut, which is 1.2 percent lower than the 4.5 percent at the national level. The projected population growth for the Asian community 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. The Anglo-Saxon 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 community is the fastest growing population in Connecticut – more than any other population group across the state. Furthermore, the income for Asian and Pacific Islanders has continued to grow since 1987 when the U.S. Census Bureau began analyzing that data from the mid 40’s (thousand dollars) to \$55,500 in the year 2000. That is much higher than the White non-Hispanic population of \$45,900, Hispanic of any race \$33,400 or \$30,400 for African-Americans. 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 the differences or similarities – in a cultural competent method – to improve the status of living of all. In reference to the significant population shifts in Connecticut such as the increasing diversity of its population – these changes have several implications for housing, transportation, law enforcement and many others that call for the

Connecticut General Assembly to respond to these challenges of a continuously changing society. The passage of this legislation would allow the members of the Connecticut General Assembly have more information before passing legislation, as well as allow these ethnic and racial communities feel that they have a connection to resources and to the powers that can potentially improve their status of living in our state.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission can positively attest to the importance of such a legislative entity based on the unique data currently being analyzed by this office, including our Latino Socio-Economic study, and information provided to several legislative committees at the invitation of several 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.

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.