



**State of Connecticut**  
**Latino and Puerto Rican**  
**Affairs Commission**

rec. 2/15/08 pm  
 Public Hearing 2/15/08 11:00 am

18-20 Trinity Street  
 Hartford, CT 06106  
 Tel. (860) 240-8330  
 Fax (860) 240-0315  
 E-Mail: [lprac@cga.ct.gov](mailto:lprac@cga.ct.gov)  
 Web Site: [www.cga.ct.gov/lprac](http://www.cga.ct.gov/lprac)

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Testimony of Mr. Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the LPRAC  
 Judiciary Committee Public Hearing – on Judicial Nominations  
 February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
 1:00 P.M.  
 Legislative Office Building, Room 2E  
 Hartford, Connecticut

Good afternoon State Senator McDonald, State Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). The LPRAC supports the re-nomination of the Honorable Carmen E. Espinosa & the Honorable Eddie Rodríguez, Jr. to be judges of the Connecticut Superior Court. HJ-14

SJ-18

The re-nomination of these judges are of extreme importance to the LPRAC because they send an important message to the community at large that the Legislature and the Governor care about diversifying the judicial branch to better reflect the ethnic composition of its population and their proven record as jurists. Furthermore, we recommend making additional appointments to increase the low 2.5% of Latino representation as judges to at least 11.2% to reflect the percentage of Latinos living in the state – as the Honorable Alexandra DiPentima stated at the fist meeting of the *Public Service and Trust Commission* several months ago, “Judges have a pivotal role...in carrying out the *Judicial Branch’s* mission to resolve matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner.”

The LPRAC believes that by making these judicial appointments we may also contribute to changing the negative perception of trust in the Judicial System, which we have been monitoring for several years through the Latino Socio-Economic Study conducted by the Center for Research & Public Policy. The results of this report will be officially announced at a press conference later during this session that will show an improvement but still low trust rating for the State of Connecticut Judicial Court System by Latinos.

Consequently, I would respectfully request your support on the previously mentioned re-nominations and for your support when they come to a vote in both chambers of the Connecticut General Assembly.