



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Testimony of Werner Oyanadel before the
Government Administration and Elections Committee
Wednesday, March 12th, 2008 in room 2A of the LOB
Subject matter: in support of S.B. No. 681 (RAISED)
“An Act Establishing a Minority Health Advisory Council”

Good morning State Senator Slossberg, State Representative Caruso, and honorable members of the *Government Administration and Elections Committee (GAE)*. My name is Werner Oyanadel, Principal Legislative Analyst for the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). I am here to speak on behalf of the LPRAC in support of S.B. No. 681 (RAISED) “An Act Establishing a Minority Health Advisory Council.”

Senate Bill 681 would establish a Minority Health Advisory Council responsible for reporting policies aimed at eliminating disparities in the health status of racial and ethnic groups in Connecticut. In specific, S.B. 681, section (1) letter (a) number (13) appoints the chairperson of the LPRAC or his/her designee to serve as an official member of the Council. The LPRAC fully supports membership in such a council, as well as, a supporter of creating an independent institution that works at improving the overall quality of health for all Connecticut residents.

The unequal treatment of ethnic and racial groups is an important and persistent issue facing health care in Connecticut. A report released in 2002 by the *Connecticut Health Foundation* concluded that Latinos and African-Americans receive lower quality health care than their white counterparts, even when income, age, insurance, and health status is taken into consideration. Five years later, the *Hispanic Health Council* announced that the State of Latino health in Connecticut is in crisis and it called upon lawmakers to work on policies that eliminate these serious disparities. The LPRAC is about to release the fourth edition of its *Latino Socio-Economic Study*. It will confirm the crisis of unequal treatment in health care. Therefore, we commend the GAE for raising this bill and for having a public discussion on the merits of this proposal. The LPRAC, for the record, is committed to work with this council and other policy makers finding a comprehensive, multi-level strategy to eliminate these disparities.

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.