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*TESTIMONY OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 11, 2009*

I appreciate the opportunity to support the continued funding of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission.

I add my voice as well to many others supporting the other commissions whose existence is threatened -- the African-American Affairs Commission, the Asian Pacific Americans Commission, the Commission on Aging, the Commission on Children and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission provides significant advocacy for a significant community with unique and profoundly important needs. The Commission is also a critical forum for bringing together the diverse segments of that community and focusing on public issues of particular importance to Latinos.

For the past 13 years, the Commission has championed many issues -- including Spanish interpreters for courts, a minority health council, tougher regulations for predatory lending and improving diversity in health services. The Commission compiles a comprehensive socio-economic study on the Latinos residing in the state.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, along with the African-American Affairs Commission, the Asian Pacific Americans Commission, the Commission on Aging, the Commission on Children and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, provide critical information to the legislature and the public on how policies impact their communities. The General Assembly makes better policy decisions because of their input.

I urge the committee to continue funding these commissions to ensure that our state policies are developed with a solid, informed base of knowledge.