



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Testimony of Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director of LPRAC

IN SUPPORT OF RAISED S.B. NO 54

**“An Act Concerning Collaboration between Boards of Education
& Law Enforcement Personnel”**

Judiciary Committee

February 24, 2014

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Sen. Coleman, Rep. Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am here today to speak in support of the proposed changes discussed in Raised S.B. No. 54 “An Act Concerning Collaboration between Boards of Education & Law Enforcement Personnel.” My name is Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director of the Connecticut General Assembly’s Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC).

This legislation would require each local and regional board of education to adopt and implement a policy, or enter into a memorandum of understanding with a law enforcement agency, concerning the use of law enforcement personnel at schools in our state. S.B. 54 also clearly defines “student arrests,” which is not defined by the state thus far and makes significant improvements in data collection on student arrests (currently not required for all incidents resulting in arrests).

LPRAC is in support of these technical changes due to in large part to a new study released by Connecticut Voices for Children – the first comprehensive study of its kind – which shows an encouraging reduction in the number of student arrests in our schools but found room for improvement particularly in regards to racial and ethnic disparities in arrests rates, together with wide variations in arrest rates among similar school districts, which suggests a need for uniform criteria in decision making aimed at preventing the unnecessary involvement of the Latino youth within the juvenile justice system.

The report noted, among other findings, that a significant share of arrests were for reasons that the report classified as likely avoidable – behaviors that were probably not criminal and could have been handled within the classroom or school. These reasons included skipping class, insubordination, and using profanities.

LPRAC for the record is mandated to review and comment on any proposed state legislation or recommendations that may affect the Latino and Puerto Rican population of the state. (LPRAC) was created by an act of the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) in 1994. This 21 member non-partisan commission is mandated to make recommendations to the CGA and the Governor for new or enhanced policies that will foster progress in achieving health, safety, educational success, economic self-sufficiency, and end discrimination in Connecticut.

We urge your support of this bill and highly recommend its approval.