

Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Budget
March 5, 2015

Good Evening Senator Bye and Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Carlos Espinoza and I'm here to speak in support of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). As an ally for Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D), LPRAC and their staff has been an important partner in our legislative campaign for education equality.

Connecticut Students for a Dream is currently in a legislative campaign to grant undocumented students access to institutional aid, the pool of tuition revenue that undocumented students pay into, but don't have access. LPRAC has been a key piece since the beginning of our campaign, Werner Oyanadel has been advocating for C4D in many ways and his staff has been fully supportive. Mr. Oyanadel has been able to talk with legislators and other public officials on our behalf as well as joining us in our meetings with legislators at the Legislative Office Building. Our message is always the same, financial aid for Higher Education in CT should be available to all regardless of federal immigration status.

Werner acknowledges the importance the agency plays in a growing Latino community that is currently happening in Connecticut and all across the country, for that reason the concern that any potential cuts will negatively affect the essential work of LPRAC is one that we share with many other Latinos and members of the community. LPRAC is also the only state commission that grants scholarships to undocumented students, with their financial support many students have been able to continue their education en route to being a working professional and a productive member of society. Cuts to the budget of the agency will undermine the important presence it has in the community in advocating for the rights of the Latino community.

As an immigrant born in Peru, I appreciate the work of the Commission and the continued support the State of Connecticut has shown in LPRAC. I hope that this support continues in order to meet the needs of the growing number of Latinos in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time,

Carlos Espinoza