



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

Appropriations Committee of the CT General Assembly, March 5, 2015

**Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Inc.
Pierrette Comulada Silverman, Vice President, Education & Training,
regarding the Governor's Budget, Raised Bill 6824,
and the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC)**

Thank you for the opportunity to express support for the valuable work of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). One of the charges of the Commission is to ensure that all members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population of the state are healthy.

Unfortunately, Connecticut has the one of the highest incidences of health disparities between its White and Latino residents. Health disparities are the result of multiple barriers including poverty and a lack of information that prevent access to health care and health coverage. In Connecticut, Latinos are almost three times as likely to be uninsured as their White counterparts. Hispanic infants are more likely to start life with a low birth weight and Hispanic infants are almost twice as likely to die as White infants. In 2011, Latino females comprised 20% of the population of females under age 18, however, Latino females accounted for 54% of births to teenage mothers (under age 18). In addition, from 2001-2005, the rate of HIV/AIDS incidence was 82 per 100,000 people for Hispanics, and only 11 for Whites. Hispanics also had substantially higher incidences of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea infection.

These staggering statistics can positively change and I am thankful that the state of Connecticut has LPRAC to keep watch and ensure that policy initiatives on issues affecting the state's Latino residents are addressed. Most recently, LPRAC brought together 21 provider organizations to discuss teenage pregnancy among Latinas. The result was a Results Based Accountability report card which looked at the number of pregnancies among Latino females under age 18 and included a proposal of three legislative actions that can help stem the tide of pregnancy among Latinas teens.

Connecticut's Hispanic population, which has grown nearly 50 percent during the past decade, is becoming a pivotal population for the state's vitality and progress and it is important that policy makers continue to have LPRAC's expertise and community collaborations as a resource on issues pertaining to education, employment, safety, health and the overall economic well-being of Latino residents.