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Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

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Testimony Supporting HB 5303

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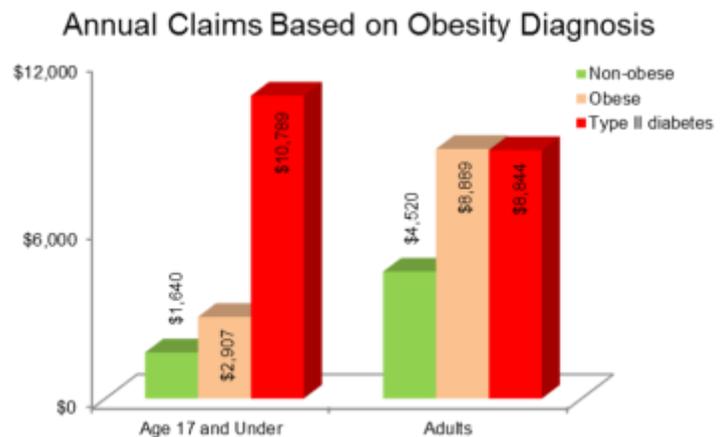
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Committee on Children, March 3rd, 2016, Hartford, CT

Good morning Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children. My name is Orlando Rodriguez and I am an Associate Commission Analyst with the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). LPRAC supports **HB 5303: AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD OBESITY**.¹

It is imperative that we reduce the high incidence of diabetes among Hispanic children, who have the **2nd highest** rate of obesity among racial/ethnic groups (grades 9-12) and who will account for 25 percent of Connecticut's children by 2020. There is also an added economic



cost associated with obesity as a child with type II diabetes will incur an **additional \$9,150** in annual healthcare costs. Furthermore, 70 percent of overweight adolescents will become overweight adults. In Connecticut in 2003, diabetes cost \$1.7 billion in direct and indirect costs.

To reduce the incidence of childhood diabetes among Latinos, we must enact policies that encourage healthy changes in the diets of Latino children from an early age. HB 5303 does this by reducing the amount of sugar in the diet of children who attend a child care center. Furthermore, this bill requires students to have a minimum 20 consecutive minutes of physical activity daily. This legislation is a good start to reducing the incidence of childhood diabetes among Hispanics.

LPRAC is grateful to this committee for its ongoing focus on the needs of Latino children throughout Connecticut. Our board has made it clear that improving the health of Hispanic children is a top priority for Latinos in Connecticut.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the sources of information used in this testimony can be found in LPRAC's 2016 Legislative Policy Agenda at, https://www.cga.ct.gov/lprac/docs/2016/LPRAC_2016Agenda_Web_08Jan2016.pdf