



# State of Connecticut

## Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

18-20 Trinity Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Tel. (860) 240-8330  
Fax (860) 240-0315  
lprac@cga.ct.gov  
www.cga.ct.gov/lprac

### Testimony Supporting HB 5497

Orlando J. Rodriguez

Associate Commission Analyst, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

Government Administration & Elections Committee

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Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Orlando Rodriguez and I am an Associate Commission Analyst with the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). LPRAC supports **HB 5497: AN ACT REQUIRING A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LIST OF LEGISLATIVELY APPOINTED BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COUNCILS.**<sup>1</sup>

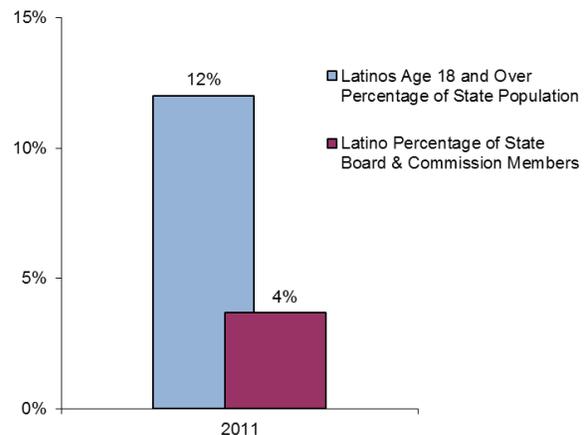
In 2011, 12 percent of the state's adult population, age 18 and over, was Latino, but only **4 percent of appointees** to state boards and commissions were Latino.

In Connecticut, Latinos have the lowest rate of involvement as local community leaders so it is not a surprise that Latinos are also the most underrepresented racial/ethnic group on state boards and commissions.

Public and quasi-public organizations at all levels of government (state, regional, and municipal) must make a determined and visible effort to recruit individuals that reflect the diversity of the communities they represent. Latinos working in both the public and private sectors should be encouraged to become more civically active. Furthermore, Connecticut can increase its stock of state-level Latino leaders by increasing transparency and information on appointments to boards, commissions, and councils, as called for in HB 5497. In addition, this could increase the number of Latinos running for state and federal elected positions where Latinos in Connecticut are also underrepresented.

LPRAC is grateful to this committee for focusing on the need to engage the state's growing Latino population in civic participation. Our board has made it clear that increasing civic participation is a top priority for Latinos in Connecticut.

**Latinos on State Boards and Commissions**



<sup>1</sup> 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](https://www.cga.ct.gov/lprac/docs/2016/LPRAC_2016Agenda_Web_08Jan2016.pdf)