



HB 7359 AN ACT CONCERNING A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK

Honorable members of the Human Services Committee, Connecticut Latinos Achieving Rights and Opportunities (“CLARO”), submits this testimony in favor of HB7359 AN ACT CONCERNING A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES NETWORK.

CLARO is a non-profit policy and advocacy organization whose mission is to promote for Latinos LGTBQI equality, policy, social justice, human rights and education addressing homophobia and heterosexism. We accomplish these goals by mobilizing our community and partner agencies on issues like marriage equality, parental rights, inclusive anti-bullying policies, employment discrimination, hate violence, privacy rights, sexuality education, adoption, domestic partnerships, and HIV/AIDS.

Over the years, we have fulfilled our mission by providing educational theatre performances to raise awareness around transgender rights; we have conducted a community assessment evaluating the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of the Latinx community towards the LGBTQ community and have hosted a conference called D’Eso No Se Habla (We Don’t Speak About That), which focused on LGBTQ Latinx youth and their families.

We support the formulation of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Health and Human Services Network. As an organization concerned about the health and well being of Latinx LGBTQ individuals, families and communities, we believe that such a network aimed at examining and prioritizing the health and service needs of this population is critical. However, we would suggest that the section regarding CLARO be amended to read, “A representative from Connecticut Latinos Achieving Rights and Opportunities (“CLARO”). As a small, all volunteer organization, it is essential to have the flexibility to choose the appropriate representative to serve the network.

In 2016 the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities formally designated sexual and gender minorities (“SGM”) as a health disparity population for NIH research. According to the NIH Director’s message, “mounting evidence indicates that SGM populations have less access to health care and higher burdens of certain diseases, such as depression, cancer and HIV/AIDS. But the extent and causes of health disparities are not fully understood and researched on how to close these gaps is lacking”.¹

As such, research from a 2010 report by the Center for American Progress noted that 64 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual (“LGB”) Latino adults have health insurance coverage compared to 77 percent of all LGB adults and 82 percent of the heterosexual adult population; and 60 percent of LGB Latino adults report alcohol abuse compared to 33 percent of the Latino heterosexual population.ⁱⁱ

The fact that this data is outdated and nearly 9 years old underscores the point and need for a LGBTQ health and human service network that will focus its research and efforts on evaluating the needs of the LGBTQ population. LGBTQ people of color experience the intersectionality of both racism and homophobia and are dually impacted by health disparities. Such legislation will assist with addressing these disparities.

Thank you.

Charlie Ortiz, President

Pedro Segarra, Vice President

Kathleen Dubuque-Gallo, Treasurer

Julio Morales, Secretary

Cindy Dubuque-Gallo, Member

ⁱ NIH, (2016) Director’s Message. Retrieved from https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/about/directors-corner/messages/message_10-06-16.html

ⁱⁱ Center for American Progress. (2010) Health Disparities in LGBT Communities of Color. Retrieved from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2010/01/15/7132/health-disparities-in-lgbt-communities-of-color/>