



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Chairperson
Richard A. Cruz
Vice Chair
Elena Trueworthy
Secretary
Emanuela Palmares Leaf
Treasurer
Yolanda Castillo

Parliamentarian:
George Hernández

Commissioners:
Ramón L. Arroyo
Migdalia Castro
Ana González
Jay González
George Hernández
Dr. Ruby O’Neill
Dr. Agnes Quiñones
Ruben Rodríguez
Dr. Eugene Salorio
Christian Soto
Pablo Soto
Feny Taylor
Danny Torres

Executive Director
Werner Oyanadel

Special Projects Director
Lucia Goicoechea-Hernández

Associate Commission Analyst
Orlando Rodríguez

Administrative Assistant
Clarisa Cardone

Minutes
LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting
November 18, 2015
Legislative Office Building 2D
5:30 pm

Commissioners Present:	Ramón L. Arroyo, Yolanda Castillo, Migdalia Castro, Richard A. Cruz, George Hernández, Dr. Ruby O’Neill, Emanuela Palmares Leaf, Dr. Agnes Quiñones, Rubén Rodríguez, Dr. Eugene M. Salorio, Pablo Soto, Feny Taylor and Elena Trueworthy, M.S.
Commissioners Absent:	Ana González, Jay González, Christian Soto and Danny Torres
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director, Lucia Goicoechea Hernández, Special Projects Director, Orlando Rodríguez, Associate Commission Analyst, Clarisa Cardone, Administrative Assistant and Nathaniel Velazquez, Intern

Tape 1 A

Commissioner Trueworthy started meeting as **Chairman Cruz** is running a little late. She asked Commissioner Palmares Leaf, Secretary to do the roll call. Quorum was established. She then introduced Dr. Estela Lopez, Interim Provost of Connecticut State Colleges and Universities who is here to talk about Mastery tests and Latino students in Connecticut.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Dr. Estela Lopez, spoke as a member of the State Board of Education. Dr. Lopez informed the board that all high school juniors will be required to take the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) because of new Connecticut legislation passed in 2015. She disagrees with this policy because the SAT is not a predictor of college success and neither is the ACT (American College Test). She does not believe this type of testing benefits most Latino high school students in Connecticut. Dr. Lopez prefers the previous policy of requiring high school juniors to take the 11th grade SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) test because it is aligned with other SBAC tests given in grades 3-8. She does not believe that use of the SAT can be reversed in the short-term since it was newly adopted in 2015. Dr. Lopez recommended that commissioners read *Bubble Trouble for Standardized Testing* in the Oct. 1st, 2015, issue of Time Magazine and *The New SAT Retains the Old Objective* in the Nov. 18th, 2015, issue of Education Week. Dr. Estela R. López is the Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System. She served for six years as a Senior Associate at Excelencia in Education, a non- profit organization committed to accelerating Latino student success. She is the former vice chancellor of Academic Affairs of the Connecticut State University System. López earned a bachelor’s degree in Spanish literature at Queens College. She then attended Columbia University, where she earned both a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in Spanish literature.

Gail Janensch and Patricia Donovan of the League of Women Voters provided an introductory statement to the board about the work of the League of Women voters in the State of Connecticut and shared their support to ending Prison Gerrymandering in Connecticut.

Tape 1 B

Chairman Cruz then introduced Danny “Swift” Garcia, World Boxing Champion to, and Welter Weight Champion of the World.

Mr. Danny “Swift” Garcia thanked everyone and considered this an honor to be sitting with LPRAC.

Chairman Cruz presented Mr. Garcia with recognition of his stellar accomplishments in the boxing world to our champ, a beautiful trophy from LPRAC.

Danny Garcia is a world renowned boxer of Puerto Rican descent and the current WBC Light Welterweight Champion of the World. Danny García was born in North Philadelphia to a mother from Bayamón, Puerto Rico and Ángel García originally from Naguabo, Puerto Rico, who was also a boxer. It was his father who introduced him to boxing, taking him to Philadelphia's Harrowgate Boxing Club when he was ten years old, the minimum age allowed by local law for a minor to train. García Sr. has since been his primary boxing coach. Having been raised in the city with the second-largest Puerto Rican community in the United States, García identified with his heritage, stating early in his career the desire to become the "next great Puerto Rican fighter". Garcia admired Boxing Hall of Famer Carlos Ortíz as his favorite boxer and considered Ortíz's fight against Lenny Matthews in Philadelphia among the most memorable he had ever witnessed.

Chairman Cruz he recognized for the record that State Representative Arthur O'Neill was present at this public meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to accept the minutes of October 21, 2015 by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Cruz reminded the board that the Connecticut General Assembly and the Governor are currently in negotiations to mitigate a multimillion dollar deficit affecting the State of Connecticut. So far, he indicated, we have a Governor's Plan (D) which would eliminate all funding to all our Legislative Commissions including LPRAC, a House & Senate Minority party's plan that would eliminate all Legislative Commissions, and a Majority's plan in the legislature that would keep all Legislative's budgets with a slight reduction. He shared this information because he indicated that he met with the LPRAC executive board recently to coordinate our response. The Executive Board suggested that we frame our position in writing on this matter and hand deliver it to our appointing authorities in the legislature. I ask that we spend some time tonight strategizing our internal rhetoric dealing with this important matter to our agency and our sister agencies in the legislature.

Motion made to accept the Chairperson's report by Commissioner Trueworthy and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Oyanadel briefed the commission on the following:

- The Connecticut General Assembly is currently in negotiations with the Governor's Office attempting to close a multimillion dollar deficit (i.e., \$402 million shortfalls in CT's current budget). LPRAC, for the record, has already observed a reduction (via lapses, rescissions) of \$26,598.00. It is our understanding that two out of three negotiators dealing with closing this deficit are in favor of eliminating the budgets for LPRAC and all other Legislative Commissions as soon as of December of this year. I highly encourage LPRAC Board members to discuss this issue in greater detail.
- LPRAC hosted a successful Scholarship Ceremony on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at the Capitol Building in Hartford. Twelve out of our 18 "Promesa Youth" & GED awardees were in attendance. This year LPRAC paid \$22,000.00 in scholarship money to 18 Hispanic youth and 4 GED award recipients. We particularly thank Verizon Wireless for their Gold sponsorship which ends with this year's scholarship Awards and Eastern Connecticut State University for their continued support consistently at the "Gold" level or \$5,000.00 for the past 5 years. They, alone help us award 5 students with that level sponsorship. We also wish to thank Central Connecticut State University, Pedro Segarra, Mayor Toni Harp, the CT Congress of Community Colleges, the Hispanic Federation, AARP and many other sponsors who continue to step up to help us award these great young men and women annually.
- A full report on our gains for our agency's 2015 Scholarship Awards Ceremony is provided by Lucia Goicoechea-Hernandez in her written report as requested.

Motion made to accept the Executive Director's report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Hernández.

Discussion:

Commissioner Rodríguez said he was upset with the email that was sent out on the budget of LPRAC. This should be addressed here at our commission meeting.

Commissioner O'Neill said that the Governor suggested consolidating the commissions not eliminating them.

Mr. Oyanadel welcomed all their feedback and stated that the information was shared via email due to the urgency of the budgetary message and potential impact to our institution. He clarified for the record that the Governor did not intend to merge the Commissions during these last budgetary discussions as erroneously stated earlier. The intention of the Governor was to eliminate "all" funding to all Legislative Commissions including LPRAC.

Floor was ceded to State Representative O'Neill who spoke in length about the budgetary negotiations process taking place to eliminate the deficit affecting Connecticut and regarding his personal knowledge and expertise dealing with similar occasions when another Legislative agency's funding was fully eliminated and how that agency was able to continue its work regardless of not having funds to operate.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

NOMINATIONS AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Hernández said that they met on October 28th and November 16th, 2015. They set last Friday, November 13th as the last day to send nominations. These are nominations we received.

For Chairperson: Commissioner Richard A. Cruz
For Vice Chair: Commission Yolanda Castillo
For Secretary: Commissioner Emanuela Palmares Leaf
For Treasurer: Commissioner Elena Trueworthy

Then he said that at this time, nominations are open on the floor – he asked three times if there are any other nominations. There were none. Nominations stayed open until prior to the end of the meeting.

Motion made to accept the Nominations Ad Hoc Committee report made by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS REPORT

TABLED

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

TABLED

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Quiñones reported the following:

1. In your packets you will find a draft tentative agenda for our Latino Policy Day which will take place on the 4th of February 2016 or if it snows the 5th. We have confirmed the participation of all the presenters. I encourage everyone to save the date.
2. As you recall we had the Retreat – you will receive the pre-final copy from Mr. Rodríguez on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, please review it. These are all policy items collected on that day. You have a week; we want it back with any comments by December 8th, 2015. Our goal is to come back to our December meeting to vote on it. Please review it.

Motion made to accept the Priorities and Legislation Committee report made by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Tape 2 A

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Trueworthy commented that this layout of an agenda is really impressive with all the partnerships. That is how we should do our work is in partnership with many especially the commissions.

Mr. Rodríguez thanked everyone and he said that as proposed by Executive Director Oyanadel that in getting all the speakers, we will also putting together a deadline for them to submit outlines of what they are going to be talking about.

Motion was adopted by voice vote with one Nay by Commissioner Dr. Ruby O'Neill.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Castillo reported in the absence of Commissioner Torres, Chair of this Committee as follows:

1. We raised total revenues of \$42,810. Out of those funds we spent \$15,271 for the October 17, 2015 event at Amarante's. We spent a total of \$23,687.12 for the November 10th event at the State Capitol giving us a combined expenditure total of \$38,958.12. When we deduct the \$38,958.12 from the income of \$42,810, it leaves us \$3,851.88 for 2016's 19th annual scholarship awards. The Staff have made the updated information available to you today.
2. The location for next year's scholarship banquet will be at Amarante's on Saturday, September 24th, 2016 once again at the same rate that we were charged this year.

3. The event on November 10th at the State Capitol went well and we had participation of at least 8 of the board members and the staff, students and parents were very pleased, 8 of the 18 students could not attend, we expected about 75 guests but only 70 attended.

Motion made to accept the Special Projects Committee report made by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Commissioner Arroyo thanked Commissioner Castillo and the staff for putting the budget report together. It looks like we have only \$3,851.88. He asked if there has been any thought about going to Hartford and or increasing the number of guests.

Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández replied that here they have to pay for parking. She can call the Hilton, the Radisson which is the old Crowne Plaza. The Convention Center is too expensive. We did go to the Bond Ball Room one time; we ended up having to park people at the last parking across the street so it did expose people for a cost. The dates go really fast, like at the Aqua Turf, they are booked until late November.

Commissioner Palmares Leaf commented that if you want to make it big, more commissioners have to sell tickets. It looked great because money was invested through donations. We need to have more Board involvement in order for it to be better attended. We need to look at other venues.

Mr. Oyanadel said that the reason we don't do bigger events anymore is in response to feedback that we received from the Appropriations Committee. LPRAC unfortunately was known as the "Party Commission" because of our heavily attended events. LPRAC is a Public Policy agency and not a funding agency was the feedback we received from our funders at the legislature. LPRAC continues to host these smaller events to respond to the negative perception we had in the legislature and as a result we have received excellent feedback from members of the Appropriations Committee in years past.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

RBA COMMITTEE

Commissioner Pablo Soto reported that the final recommendation of the RBA Committee was submitted, it's in everyone's packet, if you have any questions or have any edits feel free. If not, you will have the opportunity to discuss the next report. Next meeting will be on the first quarter 2016 to discuss how we will go about our stakeholders input to the proceedings.

Motion made to accept the RBA Committee report made by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

NEW AND OLD BUSINESS (Special Orders):

2016 LPRAC Elections:

Motion made to accept the slate for the LPRAC Executive Board made by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Chairman Cruz thanked everyone for allowing the Executive Board to continue in all that they do and he praised everyone for all the hard work that is done in this Commission.

Guidelines for LPRAC Endorsements Report:

Commissioner Quiñones said that we are leaving that report until they can incorporate the language that they agreed on and will bring it for our next meeting. **TABLED**

Commissioner Palmares Leaf asked LPRAC to send a press release urging people for support regarding the ecological disaster that took place in Brazil. They don't have access to drinking water due to an ecological disaster that happened due to the water of a dam of a mining company. Her father comes from that region and family have to help them to get water. She then asked to allow our Executive Director to send out a Press Release of the ecological disaster in Brazil and owes it to the members of the Brazilian community in Danbury to bring this issue to you.

Motion made to ask for authorization for the LPRAC to issue a Press Release with information on the dam bridge and its effects to the Doce River region calling all CT residents that are able to join our efforts in supporting the family and friends of so many members of the Brazilian community in our state who are suffering the consequences of the environmental disaster made by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Arroyo.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Tape 2 B

Motion made to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares Leaf
Secretary
LPRAC Board

EPL:cjc