



**State of Connecticut**  
**Latino and Puerto Rican**  
**Affairs Commission**

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**Associate Legislative Analyst**  
Orlando Rodríguez

**Senior Legislative Secretary**  
Clarisa Cardone

MINUTES  
LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting  
December 17, 2014  
Legislative Office Building Room 2D  
Hartford, CT  
5:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present:	Ramón L. Arroyo, Yolanda Castillo, Migdalia Castro, Richard A. Cruz, Ana González, Jay González, George Hernández, Emanuela Palmares Leaf, Dr. Agnes Quiñones, Dr. Eugene Salorio, Pablo Soto, Feny Taylor, Elena Trueworthy, M.S.
Commissioners Absent:	Danny Torres
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director, Orlando Rodríguez, Associate Legislative Analyst, Clarisa Cardone, Sr. Legislative Secretary and Gabriela Guevara, Intern

**Tap 1 A**

**Chairman Cruz** welcomed everyone to LPRAC's meeting and that all Committee Reports will be tabled except for a brief presentation from Mr. Rodriguez of the Priorities and Legislation Committee of the Legislative Agenda items. He then asked **Board Secretary Commissioner Emanuela Palmares Leaf** to do roll call. Quorum was established.

**Public Participation:**

1. **Ms. Merryl Eaton, Director of Advocacy and Education** for Mother's for Justice (MFJ) – a grass roots advocacy group that seeks to empower women to speak out on and propose solutions to policy and decision makers about issues that affect their community – spoke about the need for LPRAC to enhance advocacy in support the unmet needs of the poor via affordable/stable housing to the homeless. She specifically spoke about the need for LPRAC to work closely with Sen. Gary Holder-Winfield on a bill that will increase funding for Rental Assistance Program (RAP) certificates during the 2015 Legislative Agenda.
2. **State Representative Pamela Sawyer (R-Bolton)** spoke passionately to LPRAC about a new statewide push to publicize Connecticut's "Safe Haven" law in response to recent tragic discovery of an abandoned, dead infant in an East Hartford trash can. Rep. Sawyer and LPRAC Executive Director Werner Oyanadel, and Representative-Elect Gayle Mulligan (R-55th) will be working on the Safe Havens Law Outreach Committee at the Legislative Office Building in the upcoming months to help promote and increase the law's outreach. The law allows a distressed parent to anonymously leave an infant, up to 30 days after birth, at hospital emergency rooms without the fear of prosecution.
3. **Ms. Ingrid Alvarez DiMarzo, Director of the Connecticut Hispanic Federation.** Spoke to LPRAC about their recently released Latino Connecticut: A Call to Action, a comprehensive public policy blueprint intended to inform the lawmakers how to best respond to the needs and aspirations of the Latino community in CT. The report includes over 125 recommended reforms and investments covering five major issues and constituencies including economic empowerment, education, immigrants, civil rights, women and Latino nonprofit organizations. The policy blueprint was compiled and written by the Hispanic Federation (HF) in partnership with 11 Connecticut member agencies and partners, who comprise some of the leading nonprofit institutions across the state including feedback from Orlando Rodriguez and Werner Oyanadel from LPRAC.
1. **Mr. Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the San Juan Center in Hartford, CT.** (The San Juan Center is an agency that aims at providing counseling to families, computer training, referral services, housing to the poor and elderly and activities for the youth.) Mr. Betancourt urged LPRAC Board of Commissioners to strengthen LPRAC's collaborations with national Latino organizations such as the Hispanic Federation. Mr. Betancourt also urged LPRAC the need to expand our work in the area of advocacy, research and mobilization. He also suggested the need for LPRAC to help strengthen the capacity of our own Latino non-profit organizations in CT.

**Chairman Cruz** stated for the record that Mr. Betancourt was LPRAC's former Executive Director.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion made to approve the minutes of November 19, 2014 by Commissioner Palmares Leaf and seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairman Cruz recognized several official dignitaries for the record that are visiting LPRAC here today. These dignitaries will be speaking to our board in the month of January but they are visting us here today to get to know about our agency prior to their official visit early next year: Ambassadors Carlos Zapata, Consul General of Peru in CT, Raul Erazo Velarde, Consul General of Ecuador in CT, & Cezar Amaral, Consul General of Brazil in CT.

**Chairman Cruz** invited former Commissioner Carlos Candal, Esq. to come up to stand by his side to receive an official commendation from LPRAC. He stated for the record that Carlos played a very pivotal role in convincing our board a number of years ago about the economic and public safety benefits of the "Drive Only" program for immigrants. His research at LPRAC started several years ago and involved at a time when many experts on the field didn't believe law makers in CT had the political will to explore this policy –A policy that some lawmakers in CT today highlight as one of the most significant public safety initiative ever adopted in the State of Connecticut. He thanked Carlos and gave him an award recognition trophy.

**Mr. Candal** thanked Chairman Cruz and everyone for this recognition. He said that he was a commissioner from 2008 to 2012. At that time, in 2011 there were only 2 states in the country that provided immigrants with driver's licenses. Being a lawyer in the state's system and seeing that many undocumented immigrants being arrested because they were driving without license or insurance or registration, this would clog up the court system. He had a thought that if there was a way for these undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver's license by taking driving courses and then the state would make millions of dollars of fees. We had to show the benefits to the state and it was good timing when Rep. Juan Candelaria successfully champion the bill in the CT legislature. Thank you very much.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Motion made to table the Executive Director's report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**Chairman Cruz** then tabled all of the committee reports except for the P&L report where Mr. Rodríguez will be presenting about our Legislative Agenda. Then he mentioned that Roberto Fernandez has stepped down. In your packets you will find his letter of resignation.

#### **PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Mr. Rodríguez, Associate Legislative Analyst** presented a PowerPoint presentation of the final version of the LPRAC's 2015 Legislative Agenda. Mr. Rodriguez indicated the focus on these specific issues highlighted in the Agenda is the direct outcome of feedback from commissioners who took into account a myriad of considerations at their annual retreat held in September 2014. This is a living document and these priorities will likely change for future legislative sessions as new considerations arise.

#### **OLD & NEW BUSINESS**

**Commissioner Castro** proposed a motion to bring a speaker to New Haven to discuss the Presidential Immigration Accountability Executive Action -- Particularly as it relates to the implementation of the Executive Action here in Connecticut.

**Chairman Cruz** requested that the issue/motion be tabled so that the Executive Board can discuss/research the motion and bring our recommendation to be further discussed in the meeting of January.

**Motion made for LPRAC to support the Judicial Nominations of Alex Hernández, Sheila M. Prats and Omar Williams made by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**Motion made to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares Leaf  
Secretary  
LPRAC Board

EPL:cjc