



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Lucia Goicoechea-Hernández

Legislative Analyst

Orlando Rodríguez

Senior Legislative Secretary

Clarisa Cardone

MINUTES
LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting
May 21, 2014
Legislative Office Building Room 2D
Hartford, CT
5:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present:	Yolanda Castillo, Migdalia Castro, Richard A. Cruz, Roberto Fernández, Ana González, Jay González, George Hernández, Emanuela Palmares Leaf, Dr. Eugene Salorio, Pablo Soto, Feny Taylor and Danny Torres
Commissioner on the phone:	Francisco R. Borres
Commissioners Absent:	Rosa Acosta, Ramón L. Arroyo, Isaías T. Díaz, Esq., Elena Trueworthy, M.S. and Dr. Agnes Quiñones
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director and Clarisa Cardone, Sr. Legislative Secretary
Interns:	Nicole Sanclemente Jemel Wizzard

Tape 1 A

Chairman Cruz asked **Board Secretary Commissioner Palmares-Leaf** to do roll call. Quorum was established.

Public Participation:

Meeting was initiated by a forum on Remedial Education Reform in Connecticut. Transcript of discussion is attached.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of April 16, 2014 by Commissioner Soto and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Salorio. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Cruz It gives me great pleasure to welcome our newest addition to our professional staff. Orlando Rodriguez was selected from a broad range of high caliber candidates for the position of Legislative Analyst and even though he doesn't officially start until next week. He has graciously agreed to accept our invitation to join us here today. Mr. Rodriguez, would you like to say a few words?

Mr. Rodríguez thanked everyone for the invitation and expressed enthusiasm to begin his work at LPRAC and other pertinent collaborations with the community. Mr. Rodríguez indicated that he was born in Cuba and came to the U.S. when he was three. He also indicated that he has been analyzing Connecticut's socioeconomics since 2002 starting at UConn's Center for Population Research then as a Senior Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children. He has researched housing, income and poverty, demographics, and K-12 education finance specific to Connecticut. He is also very familiar with the socioeconomics of the Latino population in Connecticut. Moreover, he has testified before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights regarding racial profiling in Connecticut and was a co-chair of the legislature's task force to study impediments to fair housing choice. Orlando received a B.S. from Louisiana State University and an M.A. from Ohio State University. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador many years ago.

Commissioner Palmares Leaf reminded everyone that when LPRAC had its retreat earlier during the year, Mr. Rodríguez was our invited speaker and provided LPRAC a very informative presentation about the number of school arrests in Connecticut and a very comprehensive analysis on ways to improve the system legislatively speaking. She welcomed him to the staff and looked forward to reviewing his future research.

Chairman Cruz also reported the following items of relevance to LPRAC:

As I continue to learn about the internal work of the Commission as the Chair of the Board I was briefed by our staff regarding my liaison responsibilities that require my active participation in the Commissions on Health Equity, Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System, & the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project. These are legislative Commissions that will require my active participation and I will happy to represent our board as delineated by state requirements.

Last month I asked everyone in the board to inform us which committees they would like to serve during the upcoming months and I am very happy to report that the majority of LPRAC members already responded. Therefore, I want to thank everyone for your cooperation and willingness to serve. In your packets you have a copy of the list, please make sure you're listed in at least two committees. Committee Chairs only serve in one committee and Executive Committee Members do not have to serve in any committee.

Now I want to ask all Committee Chairs to work with your committee members and staff delineating your monthly activities and list your meeting date preferences in the committee sheet in the next few days. If you can't find a date the E-Board will select one for your committee. Again, the Committee list is your packets and it will be listed in our website for future reference.

I also want to publicly commend Commissioner Torres and staff for his leadership putting together our latest Hispanic Veterans Ceremony. It was a very successful event as measured by the large amount of participants and state dignitaries present. Congratulations!

Motion made to accept Chairperson's report by Commissioner Palmares-Leaf and seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Discussion:

Commissioner Soto thanked the Commission and Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández for the honor.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. LPRAC Chairman Richard Cruz requested to be our agency's official representative to the Commission on Health Equity (CHE) after he was briefed of his responsibilities as Chair of the LPRAC. LPRAC for the record is an official member of the CHE by state law. The mission of the CHE is to eliminate disparities in health status based on race, ethnicity, gender and linguistic ability, thereby improving the quality of health for all of the state's residents. Public Act No. 08-171 states that the Chairman of LPRAC or his /her designee will represent the CHE and based on his request to be the official voice of LPRAC at this Commission his request was granted immediately. I sent a letter to the CHE informing them of this change.
2. I commend all the Special Projects Committee and staff for conducting a great tribute to Hispanic Veterans on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at the State Capitol. This event measured by its attendance and caliber of its speakers was a total success and everyone organizing it should be commended for a job well done.
3. LPRAC Biennial Budget Revisions (Public Act 14-47 – House Bill No. 5596) includes a small decrease for LPRAC's FY 2014-2015. The new budget is of \$447,667.00 a decrease of \$2,367.00 from the budget adopted last year. Moreover, the funds targeted to the Latino non-profits in Connecticut observed a \$20,000.00 decrease.
4. Here is a list of major public acts adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 2014 that are relevant to LPRAC's mandate. The Minimum Wage Increase (PA 14-1); Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for Minor Children in Family Matters (PA 14-3); Human Trafficking Victims Legislation (sHB 5040); the creation of the Office of Early Childhood (PA 14-39) and other Preschool Programs (PA 14-41 & PA 14-39); Remedial Support changes (HB 5597 § 209, effective July 1, 2014); & Taser Reform in Connecticut (sHB 5389).
5. LPRAC also experienced a significant victory with the passage of Senate Bill 18, which LPRAC supported throughout the 2014 legislative process. This new program entitled "English language learner educator incentive program" redesigns an existing teachers' loan reimbursement program, administered by the Office of Higher Education (OHE), as an incentive grant and loan reimbursement program for college and university students studying to be teachers. Both the existing and proposed programs target those seeking credentials as bilingual education teachers or teachers of English to speakers of other languages. (PA 14-21)
6. Two significant legislative defeats for LPRAC took place during the 2014 Legislative Session that included:
 - Medical Interpreters: House Bill No. 5385, which would have required hospitals to provide language interpreter services for non-English speaking patients died in the Senate after having passed the House. Current law requires acute care hospitals "to the extent possible only" to undertake a number of activities to ensure that patients who do not speak English have access to their services, including (1) preparing and maintaining a list of qualified interpreters, (2) posting multilingual notices regarding the availability of interpreters, and (3) establishing liaisons with non-English speaking communities in their geographic service areas (CGS § 19a-490i). This bill would have required that acute care hospitals ensure the availability of interpreter services for patients whose primary language is spoken by at least 5% of the population residing in the hospital's geographic service area;

- Bilingual Education Reform: An amendment on bilingual education proposed by State Representative Juan Candelaria failed to pass the legislative process in 2014. The original concept was filed by Rep. Candelaria via Proposed Bill No. 5169 at the request of LPRAC. The bill included language to expand the limit an eligible student can spend in bilingual education from the current limit of 30 months to 60 months. However, HB 5169 died in the Education Committee shortly after it was introduced. However, Rep. Candelaria and Rep. Sanchez resurrected the issue via Senate Bill No. 476 after a partial agreement was reached at the education committee to extend the program time to 40 months. Unfortunately, the concept died once again at the Appropriations Committee after a harmful fiscal note was issued on this concept by the Office of Fiscal Analysis. While the concept was resurrected one final time by Representative Candelaria via a negotiated agreement, the amendment was not called by the State Senate in the final hour of the 2014 legislative session and the bill died. LPRAC for the record, argued that the costs to local municipalities associated with increasing the limit an eligible student can spend in bilingual education (i.e., 30 to 40 months) is currently “unknown” because the State Department of Education (SDE) does not collect this data. However, it was our understanding that there would be no additional costs to either the State or local municipalities with this recommendation since the Bilingual Education Program in Connecticut is funded via a grant that is currently capped at \$1.9 million and the suggested amendment would not change that.
- 7. On Friday, May 16th, 2014 I met with Melody A. Currey, Commissioner of the State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to discuss the implementation of Public Act No. 13-89 which allows the DMV to issue driver’s licenses “for driving purposes only” to undocumented immigrants in the State of Connecticut effective January 1, 2015. Commissioner Currey informed me that her department will begin to take applications online starting September of this year and conduct an aggressive grassroots informational campaign of the new license requirements. In specific, she asked for our help coordinating a “Train the Trainers” event at the Legislative Office Building to help advocates inform the general public about this new law.
- 8. The Public Information Committee finished the production of the Public Service Announcement (LPRAC) about the LPRAC’s 2014 Scholarship Reception. The goal of the PSA is to encourage the general public to purchase tickets to the Scholarship Awards Ceremony scheduled for Saturday, October 11, 2014. The Committee will be meeting with the General Managers of Univision (5/28/14) and Telemundo (6/2/14) in the upcoming weeks to discuss ways to air this PSA and we encourage all members to join us at your convenience.

Motion made to accept the Executive Director’s report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Soto. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Motion made to table the Public Information report by Commissioner Borres and seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Torres, Chair for this Committee said that his report is in writing and in all packets. He wanted to mention a few items as follows:

1. At the Veteran’s event 39 Veterans were honored, 8 which were females and three deceased. We did honor Commissioner Pablo Soto as well.
2. that there are 370 tickets to sell for LPRAC’s 17th Annual Scholarship Ceremony/20th Anniversary and we are considering sending out email to everyone to help sell tickets.

Motion made to accept the Special Projects Committee report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Hernández.

Discussion:

Commissioner Ana González asked if we can solicit sponsorship from organizations, i.e. one of our corporate neighbors in this area. Is that legal?

Chairman Cruz announced that this is our 20th Anniversary and he would like commissioners to help sell tickets, secure tables and get sponsorships.

Commissioner Torres mentioned that if you look at line #11, they will be scheduling meetings with 21 law firms and one corporate sponsor so everyone is encouraged to try to find anybody and everybody.

Commissioner Castillo suggested sending invites to people we sent to these past 20 years through Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández and that each and every commissioner help sell the tickets to make it a successful event.

Commissioner Palmares Leaf suggested to maybe having some posters of something we did important as our history at a cocktail hour.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

RBA COMMITTEE

Commissioner Dr. Salorio, Chair for this Committee reported that they had to postpone the last two RBA sessions from Tuesday, May 20th to Tuesday, May 27th, 2014 due to unforeseen illness that affected our consultant/moderator.

In the morning we will be doing Public Safety and in the afternoon, Discrimination. We have a tentative list of people who have confirmed their attendance. We would love to have more commissioners attend.

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

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Fernández, Chair of this committee Commended Mr. Oyanadel for all his tremendous work during the legislative session. There were some victories and some bitter defeats regarding our recommended English Language Learners Bill. He called the Executive Board during the last day of the legislative session to update them on a multitude of meetings between LPRAC staff, legislative leaders and legislators on legislative amendments being decided with our feedback that ultimately failed to pass on the last day of session. Legislators working on the ELL bill reached an agreement that included the creation of a taskforce which would have studied our recommendations, a partial increase of time for bilingual education among other technical changes unfortunately that agreement run out of time. The exact same thing took place with the hospital interpreters' bill that also was a Joint Favorable Substitute which means that everybody in the Public Health Committee agreed with the language.

Tap 2 B

Commissioner Fernández (cont.) We did have some victories such as the Minimum Wage Bill. One of the issues that will make the ELL Bill easier to pass next year is the fact that the legislature did pass the \$5,000 incentive for any teacher who goes into ELL preparation programs and they can get that taken out of their loans. LPRAC was also invited to discuss an amendment regarding Taser usage by law enforcement. The Executive Director and I both attended a meeting at the ACLU and the NAACP as well as with the OPM Secretary. The information shared at that meeting included data on 14 deaths from tasing and 8 of those deaths were individuals of Latino surnames. The amendment ultimately passed in the last day of session. He thanked Mr. Oyanadel once again and should be recognized.

Motion made to accept the Priorities & Legislation Committee report by Commissioner Castro and seconded by Commissioner Ana González.

Discussion:

Commissioner Castillo said that based on the presentation today, it's something that as a Commission we really need to look into what's going on with the new law and how it's going into play and how it will affect or improve our situation for our Latino kids. If we don't look at the Achievement Gap and where we are at, none of this is going to work. We can work together with others to monitor and see where it goes and if there is something that needs to be amended at this law or something we can research now that Mr. Rodríguez is here.

Mr. Oyanadel also commended Commissioner Fernández for his leadership at the helm of the Priorities and Legislation Committee and for his public service testifying this session in a broad range of issues favored by LPRAC including testimony before the Achievement Gap Taskforce, Black and Latino Caucus among others.

Chairman Cruz also commended Commissioner Fernandez for his detail oriented leadership during the 2014 legislative session which included a significant number of phone calls, discussions with legislators and impromptu meetings with staff, committee clerks and lawmakers – his work is extremely appreciated.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON BY-LAWS

As Commissioner Díaz, Esq., Chair of this Committee was absent, report was tabled.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Dr. Salorio welcomed Mr. Rodríguez and looking forward to working with him on the RBA.

Mr. Oyanadel showed a 15 second Public Service Announcement video production that was just produced by the Public Information Committee that talks about our Scholarship Program. For anybody that is interested, we are going to send a delegation of Commissioners and Staff to meet with the General Managers of Univision and Telemundo to ask them air this PSA according to federal guidelines.

Motion made to have CALAHE do a half page ad for \$400 vs. \$500 rather than a quarter page ad in the LPRAC's 17th Annual Scholarship/20th Anniversary program book by Commissioner Torres and seconded by Commissioner Castro -- Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. by Commissioner Fernandez and seconded by Commissioner Palmares-Leaf. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares Leaf
Secretary, LPRAC Board

EPL:cjc