



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Richard A. Cruz
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Secretary
Emanuela Palmares-Leaf
Treasurer
Yolanda Castillo

Commissioners:
Ramón L. Arroyo
Migdalia Castro
Roberto C. Fernandez
Ana Gonzalez
Jay Gonzalez
George Hernández
Dr. Agnes Quiñones
Dr. Eugene M. Salorio
Pablo Soto
Feny Taylor
Danny Torres

Executive Director
Werner Oyanadel

Special Projects Director
Lucia Goicoechea-Hernández

Associate Legislative Analyst
Orlando Rodríguez

Senior Legislative Secretary
Clarisa Cardone

MINUTES
LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting
November 19, 2014
Legislative Office Building Room 2D
Hartford, CT
5:30 p.m.

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

Tape 1 A

Chairman Cruz asked **Board Secretary Commissioner Emanuela Palmares Leaf** to do roll call. Quorum was established. He then announced our first speaker for public participation.

Commissioner Fernández publicly recused himself from the Public Participation portion of the agenda and walked out of the room.

Public Participation:

Attorney Sheryl Sharp, Deputy Commissioner of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights Opportunity (CHRO) spoke in length about mission of the CHRO and specifically about the process and length of a discrimination complaint with their office. The CHRO is allowed to conduct what is called a "Commission Initiated Complaint," which requires a vote of the CHRO Commission. The CHRO received information from LPRAC that there is an allegation of discriminatory conduct in the area of Windham, CT and the CHRO has identified a respondent. The CHRO, therefore, is conducting a "confidential" fact gathering process not a Commission Initiated Complaint and while this fact gathering process takes time the CHRO has assured LPRAC that they will expedite their case review according to their guidelines in order to respond to LPRAC's request in a timely manner. She also mentioned that there are two attorneys assigned to consider this case and most importantly she could not talk about the details of the case.

Mrs. Almodovar addressed LPRAC at the request of LPRAC Commissioner Emanuela Palmares-Leaf. She spoke about a new documentary she is working on about immigration in CT, including federal raids, racial/ethnic profiling, and civil right abuses against immigrants in East Haven. She showcased a brief synopsis of the documentary which included interviews with witnesses and players around immigration in our communities and their efforts to fight for equal justice and effect change. These personal stories are then placed in the larger context for the passage of comprehensive immigration reform. For the record, Connecticut native Jamie Almodovar Bennison grew up hearing tales of her father's childhood immigration from San Juan to New York. Around ten years ago, she took a break from her social work career and moved to Montreal. There she trained with a former television reporter to learn all aspects of documentary filmmaking. Now she has combined those filmmaking skills with her passion for storytelling and social justice to create her first documentary entitled: "Here: one small blue state's struggle with immigration". Jamie earned a BA in English from Sacred Heart University and a Master of Social Work from Columbia University. She is a forensic social worker in Connecticut's juvenile courts.

Tape 1 B

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of October 15, 2014 by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy. Motion was adopted by voice vote with one abstention.

Mr. Oyanadel announced that we have an invited guest, Mr. John Foxx. He wants to be a member of the board and he wants to listen to the LPRAC proceedings.

Motion made to suspend meeting to go into Executive Session by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

First of all I would like to invite Mr. Oyanadel and Clarisa Cardone to join me here by my side. On behalf of all the LPRAC Commissioners, staff, and the Connecticut General Assembly it gives me great pleasure to officially recognize the contributions made by Clarisa Cardone who last weekend celebrated her 10th year of state service at LPRAC. Therefore, I ask for a warm round of applause from all of us as we as a board through the Employee Recognition Program recognize her accomplishments with an engraved Certificate in wooden and matted frame. Congratulations!!!

I would also like to request your support sending me names of Latino leaders to me and Mr. Oyanadel so that we can make recommendations to the Office of Governor of the State of Connecticut for executive appointments in the upcoming weeks. As you know, our agency is non-partisan but we strongly believe in the diversity of top positions in state government and this is the time where we can help enhance the diversity of top positions in the halls of power. If you have a candidate that you would like to recommend, please ask them to forward their updated resume for further review and consideration.

I also would like to inform you that as a result of our last board retreat the Executive Committee and staff will be moving forward in the next few months with a new study regarding board committee composition in order to examine best practices and maximize our effectiveness as we respond to our legislative mandate under the law.

The Executive Committee also would like to request all committee chairs to be available in the upcoming months to meet with us in a quarterly basis as we shall try to make improvements how we communicate our efforts in 2015.

As you will hear shortly from Comm. Gonzalez, Chair of the Public Information Committee, LPRAC staff is currently coordinating quarterly meetings with the Governor to follow-up with a previous agreement with LPRAC last summer. It is my wish to send a delegation of LPRAC Commissioners to these meetings so if you are interested in joining us please let me know at your convenience in order to make this happen.

I also would like to officially commend LPRAC Commissioner Pablo Soto for his electoral efforts and I would like to officially commend Aundré Bumgardner of Groton for his recent election to the Connecticut General Assembly by 39 votes as the youngest person to serve in the legislature's history. He is 20 years old -- Bumgardner's mother, a school principal in Windham, is Puerto Rican; his father, who works in East Lyme's water and sewer department, is of Panamanian and African American heritage.

Health Equity Commission Report – I have attended several meetings of the Health Equity Commission as directed by state law and I have to the best of my abilities attempted to prioritize medical interpreters as a top issue of legislative discussion. It is my understanding that it will be one of their top issues next session and therefore I am excited to have been part of these efforts on behalf of LPRAC. Moving forward I have asked Mr. Orlando Rodriguez to be my proxy vote in 2015 based on agreements and/or recommendations made by the LPRAC Board.

Motion made to accept Chairperson's report by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to accept the Health Equity Commission report by Commissioner Soto and seconded by Commissioner Palmares Leaf. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

LPRAC in the past two months celebrated our agency's 20th year anniversary, provided \$20,000.00 in scholarships to our youth, and conducted research in areas of teen pregnancy in results Based Accountability format, second language acquisition for English Language Learners, and is conducting research on Taser Model Policy use in CT. LPRAC also conducted outreach events in the City of Meriden, Hartford, & Bridgeport. Furthermore, at the invitation of elected officials from the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) and members of the public, LPRAC participated in forums, radio programs, video productions and translated/interpreted public information intended to raise awareness of critical issues for our community. In specific, LPRAC worked with State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) with community stakeholders on a "Train-Trainer" program for the newly created "Drive Only" Driver's License and LPRAC is currently providing assistance with the Governor's Emergency Communications Task Force. LPRAC is also researching Emergency Communications with researchers from the University of Connecticut and Eastern Connecticut State University determining the effectiveness of the state government in implementing communication protocols to reach marginalized Spanish-speaking populations. LPRAC is also providing active assistance to the Health Equity Commission, and to the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project (CTRP3) implementing our agency's initiated changes to the Alvin W. Penn Anti-Racial Profiling Law. LPRAC through its Priorities & Legislation Committee is currently developing our agency's 2015 Legislative

Agenda, working on judicial nominations, and setting up a public forum early next year that aims at discussing the challenges of English Language Learners (ELL) from a public policy perspective. The Executive Board and staff is embarking in a new research project about our agency's committee composition and working on alleged discrimination issues in Windham Public Schools. Finally, LPRAC via our Special Projects Committee and Executive Board are reviewing ways to make improvements to our scholarship awards program and community outreach events.

Motion made to accept the Executive Director's report by Commissioner Castro and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

As Commissioner Ana González, Chair for this Committee is absent; Mr. Oyanadel gave a brief update on the work of the committee including a discussion about the need to increase our work in other languages such as Portuguese.

Motion made to accept the Public Information Committee report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Tape 2 A

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Fernández, Chair of this committee left, Mr. Rodríguez reported the following:

1. They met on November 3, 2014, Commissioners Fernández, Dr. Quiñones and Trueworthy were present as well as Mr. Oyanadel. They presented a draft of the 2015 Policy Agenda which contains 13 different agenda items. A motion was passed to accept. The plan is to provide the next to final version to the full committee at the meeting in December. Commissioner Trueworthy asked that Mr. Rodríguez prioritize the 13 agenda items into our mandated issue areas within LPRAC's statute – i.e., Education, health, discrimination, economic self-sufficiency, & public safety.
2. They also discussed having a 2015 forum, they discussed the agenda and it will be held on January 13, 2015 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the State Capitol in Room 310.

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

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

As Commissioner Torres, Chair for this Committee was absent, report was tabled.

RBA COMMITTEE

Commissioner Dr. Salorio, Chair for this Committee reported the following:

1. On the day that we had our commission meeting in Meriden, we did the results based accountability meeting at the LOB on teenage pregnancy. Mr. Rodríguez has come up with the first draft of the turn the curve report, it's being revised. He welcomes anyone, certainly Commissioner Soto who was there who is interested to read it and read the comments. The draft was sent to everyone, please submit any comments. We need to submit it to OLM and the Legislature by the end of the year.
2. We need to meet to determine our agenda for the spring. Mr. Oyanadel view is that we should probably be doing two turn the curve sessions per year, one in the fall and one in the Spring. Anyone who has suggestions of what a good topic might be, we've come up with some that look good. We would like to tie them and so far as possible to the agenda, determine the policy items from the Priorities and Legislative Committee.

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

Commissioner Palmares-Leaf gave an update on the **Governor Emergency Communications Taskforce**. She represents the Commission on this taskforce that has this goal to take a look at how the government of our state is communicating with non-English speakers in the population with special needs in times of emergency. The goal of this taskforce is divided into two sections. The first one was to provide a preliminary report with recommendations for emergency situations pre hurricane season and we did that in July. She chairs a subcommittee that is with that taskforce that is responsible for looking at the specific communication methods between non-English speakers and

members of our community who have special needs as well. Out of the first set of recommendations that they have implemented through the work of the subcommittee, as you saw when the Governor announced the preliminary report, there was a person next to him not only was the interpreter for those who are hard of hearing and needed the sign language but for the first time he had a live translator, one of the member of their taskforce that translated the communication from the Governor in Spanish. The long term recommendations through the work of the subcommittee that she is chairing is to create an educational plan that is inclusive of the top 10 most spoken languages in the state inclusive of the specific needs of different folks in the disabled community especially those that rely on medical equipment and how the government can reach hard to reach populations such as undocumented immigrants at a time of emergency. They are going to be implementing a sign system where they are going to be using pictures with key words. They are trying to make sure all state agencies have their materials translated and have them in a central hub of information.

Motion made to accept the Governor Emergency Communications Taskforce report by Commissioner Dr. Salorio and seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Cruz asked about procedurally wise, we need some names a.s.a.p., but yet we have until December to vote on it. Would it be upon the Executive Committee to make that approval or do I need an approval from the commission?

Mr. Oyanadel advised that they have one recommendation that they can make today. In regards to other names because time is of the essence, we can get you names, we can email them to you with their resumes and more information that we have, we can call each other on the phone or we can call for an Executive Commission meeting so we can vote just on those issues or if there is no problems, we can make a recommendation, if everybody is in agreement, in December we can make a formal motion.

Motion made to vote for Dr. Nivea Torres for Commissioner of Education by Commissioner Castro and seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Motion was adopted by voice vote with one nay and one abstention.

Motion made to amend LPRAC By-Laws to recognize the Brazilian Community and then to translate to giving the information out to them which is growing in the State by Commissioner Castro and seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Chairman Cruz asked Mr. John Foxx, public participant to talk to the commission.

Mr. John Foxx said that he most recently was a candidate for State Senate in the 7th district in Enfield/Windsor Locks/ East Granby/Granby. He is a Latino, his mother is a full blooded Mexican and Grandparents are from Mexico too but he does not speak Spanish very well. He would like to participate in this commission. He is going to submit his letter to his State Rep. to see if he can get appointed.

Chairman Cruz said that we have room for more and it makes us stronger as a commission and as a community. He has been in this commission going on five years and this is not just a commission but a family. We work hard together.

Commissioner Castillo asked if we had a video on voting. She would like to see it at next meeting.

Commissioner Dr. Salorio asked where is our next meeting.

Chairman Cruz said that in December, we still have some work on the table to do; we normally have December as our Holiday party. Can we still pull off a meeting and then go to the dinner.

Mr. Oyanadel responded that we can work with the Executive Committee in developing a plan and we will communicate that to the rest of the commission probably in a couple of days

Motion made to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Salorio. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares Leaf
Secretary
LPRAC Board

EPL:cjc