



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs
Commission

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MINUTES
LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting
April 15, 2015
Legislative Office Building Room 2A
Hartford, CT
5:30 p.m.

Chairperson

Richard A. Cruz

Vice Chair

Elena Trueworthy, M.S.

Secretary

Emanuela Palmares-Leaf

Treasurer

Yolanda Castillo

Commissioners:

Ramón L. Arroyo

Migdalia Castro

Ana González

Jay González

George Hernández

Dr. Ruby O'Neill

Dr. Agnes Quiñones

Ruben Rodríguez

Dr. Eugene M. Salorio

Christian Soto

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

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

Tape 1 A

In the absence of Chairman Cruz due to a previously scheduled trip out-of-state, Vice-Chair Trueworthy chaired the meeting. She announced that there will be two presenters this evening but first she welcomed a newly appointed Commissioner to our state agency. Mr. Chris Soto, she indicated for the record, currently serves as the Founder and Director of Higher Edge, a college completion organization that guides Southeastern CT's low-income & first-generation college-bound students, launching them on the path to a college degree and beyond. After serving five years as a Coast Guard Officer, Chris left the service to pursue a career in education. He received a B.S. from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and earned a Masters (MPA) from Brown University. Mr. Soto was appointed to LPRAC by State Representative Themis Klarides, House Minority Leader in 2015.

Commissioner Chris Soto said that he landed in New London at the Coast Guard Academy and is a Veteran. He had a great experience in New London and launched Higher Edge and soon will expand this new endeavor to Willimantic this fall.

Vice-Chair Trueworthy then asked Commissioner Palmares Leaf to do roll call and quorum was established. She then introduced former State Representative and now a member of the Hartford Public School System, Mr. Kelvin Roldan. He was to be joined by State Representative Juan Candelaria but unfortunately he was absent due to the seasonal flu. He discussed the work of the English Language Acquisition and Educational Equities Workgroup.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Roldan said that since LPRAC had two members participating in the work group he will provide us with a general overview of the work. He acknowledged Mr. Oyanadel's and Mr. Rodríguez's help in the process in terms of providing information and being engaged in the discussion. At the beginning of the 2015 Legislative Session the Speaker of House asked him to lead the English Language Acquisition and Educational Equity Work Group and gave him 45 days to deliver a set of recommendations. The Education Committee in the General Assembly will have an opportunity to reflect and respond those recommendations. The single most important finding is that the system is woefully underfunded and understaffed. If we do not directly address this issue, Connecticut will never close the nation's most significant achievement gap. Imagine running a school system of nearly 35,000 students, which would be the largest in Connecticut, with \$1.9 million and a single staff person. That is essentially the crux of the matter. Hartford Public Schools, Hartford has the single largest number of ELL student, we account for 11% of the overall state population of ELL learners. They do not get any more to deliver quality education to their students. Connecticut has the single largest achievement gap in the country and the single largest achievement gap in Connecticut is the EL student vs. the rest of the state population. The majority of our students, 70% of the students are Spanish speaking students. Number two in the group are Portuguese speaking students. In CT there are 6 people being trained as bilingual educators specializing in Portuguese. We have a crisis brewing that really needs our lawmakers' urgent attention. They looked at LPRAC's recommendation to move 30 block period bilingual education to a 5 year period.

Program Design

- Based on district request or through the determination of the Department of Education, allow for an increase in the current period of bilingual instruction from 30 months to 60 months (5 academic years). However, the Work Group recommends that program standards be developed and adopted prior to making the shift to 60 months to ensure positive results. The development of the standards should be done in partnership with practitioners on the ground and institutions of higher education.
- The Department of Education, in partnership with professionals on the ground and institutions of higher education, should define program types and provide the necessary supports to help districts identify which program is best suited for their student population. Program design should also give consideration to the stages of language acquisition, age and grade level, and staff capacity.
- In collaboration with institutions of higher education, current programs should be reviewed and prioritized to support research-based, effective practices.
- Program pilots should be established across the state, concentrating on what research shows are the most effective language acquisition models. The selection process for the pilots should consider, among other things, district size, EL student characteristics, geography, Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), the number of ELL/bilingual teachers, and language groups. An independent evaluator from institutions of higher education or a professional evaluator with language acquisition expertise must be part of the pilot studies.
- It is important to connect the curriculum and the learning activities to a student's prior knowledge and experiences. As such, family/caregiver involvement should play an important role in the English language acquisition process. DOE should provide districts with best research-based practices on how to best involve families in the language acquisition process.

Teacher Capacity

- To address the ELL/bilingual teacher shortage issue, the Department of Education should:
 - Allow for certification reciprocity with other states.
 - Design multiple alternative paths leading to certification for bilingual and ESL teachers. Consideration should be given to granting Durational Shortage Area Permits for up to two years for teachers with TESOL coursework. The Department of Education must collaborate with institutions of higher education in the design of rigorous programs to meet the needs of the state's EL students.
 - The Department of Education should work with teacher credentialing organizations and other partners to incentivize and grow the number of ELL/bilingual teachers. Particular attention should be given to language groups with low teacher numbers in the preparation pipeline.
 - Work with higher education and other partners to ensure that information regarding available incentive-based programs are reaching potential candidates.
- The Department of Education should ensure that districts have professional development (PD) plans with an emphasis on language development and culturally responsive pedagogy. Learning-centered methodologies, differentiated instruction and community-based approaches that support an inclusive learning environment throughout the school should be included in all PD planning.
- RESCs should play a role in teacher professional development (for both ELL and content teachers). DOE should work with RESCs to define that role and coordinate support for districts with low numbers of EL identified students.

Accountability

- In order to provide appropriate guidance and support, DOE should adopt disaggregated data collection processes, monitor and disseminate EL student data in all tested subject areas.
- DOE should provide an annual report on the progress of ELs in all Local Education Agencies. This report should include, but not be limited to, standardized test performance data, graduation data, and program transition data by language group.
- In order to ascertain content knowledge, as soon as the option becomes available, EL students should be allowed to take the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium exam in their native language. Student scores should not count towards the school/district performance for the first two years.
- DOE should ensure that districts are providing families with clear guidance and information on their rights as it pertains to accommodations.
- In collaboration with districts and higher education, DOE should clearly define the pre- and post-assessment system and assessment schedule. Priority should be given to assessment protocols and research-based approaches that focus on achievement gap closure.
- **Resources**
- DOE should be provided with the appropriate resources to staff and support the needs of EL students. The State of Connecticut should provide districts with appropriate levels of funding to support the needs of EL students. There is a need to develop an equitable formula that adequately supports EL students.

- Current investments, such as the Commissioner’s Network and Alliance Districts funding, should be reviewed and structured so that EL needs are included in funding priorities.
- A program and funding audit should be conducted to better understand efficacy and adequacy of current programming. This process should include family/caregiver and student input.

Commissioner Palmares Leaf said that it was a pleasure and an honor to serve on this taskforce and to be able to be a part of the conversations and research that led to the recommendations listed by Mr. Roldan today. One of the most valuable things that they did as a work is really have a more holistic approach to defining the deficiencies in the current ESL system and being very inclusive of other languages.

Commissioner O’Neill asked how is the state going to operationalize this approach. Do you have any measurements that will show us how it would specifically benefit ELL students?

Mr. Roldan replied that one of the many areas that they are currently reviewing is how they are going to address the capacity issues at the State Dept. of Education. One person cannot operationalize this approach but their intent is to create pilot programs around Connecticut that would help them better define what the best approaches are across the State of CT so that we can learn from those pilots and then be able to grow from there so that there is a plan for districts across the State of CT to follow.

Next guest is Cheri Quickmire, Executive Director of Common Cause of Connecticut discussed Prison Gerrymandering and showed a brief presentation. They have been working with a group called the Prison Policy Initiative for the last few years to try to raise the issue and to try to talk with folks around the state about what the challenges are. What the problem is that the U.S. Census counts incarcerated people as residents of the community where they are locked up rather than their legal residence.

Commissioner Pablo Soto asked why the legislation on this issue hasn’t passed.

Ms. Quickmire responded that clearly one of the reasons has to do with the particular district that house prisons. They count the folks as members of their districts and bristle at the idea of being suggested that they don’t actually represent those people in those districts. She would be very supportive that if they decided to support these folks that when they are released instead of backing up a bus that then takes them to Hartford, New Haven, New Britain, Bridgeport and Waterbury that they offer them housing and jobs in their community.

Tape 1 B

Commissioner Pablo Soto asked how homeless are counted.

Ms. Quickmire replied that if you are homeless in New Haven and you happen to count your residence as a bench in the main park in the state you will be counted there. The data is collected based on where the person is at that point in time at the U.S. Census date.

Mr. Rodríguez reported that the total population count is included in what’s called the Education Cost Sharing Grant. What they do is take the wealth of the town, its property tax base and divide by the number of people. If you have more people, your per capita goes down so in these towns that have prisoners, the prisoners are actually reducing the wealth of the town which increased the money that they get for education, some town get more, other towns get less. In your packets, there is the bill 980 and you can see what’s going on. It states that they are going to lose state funding from ESC if they lose the prisoners.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of March 18, 2015 by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

As Chairman Cruz was absent, Vice-Chair Trueworthy gave the Chairperson’s Report. She said that this past month, the commission has been very active with our agency outreach events at the legislature. Following are a few of the events:

She commended everyone that attended all our agency outreach events at the legislature this past month:

- March 25 Legislative Meet/Greet of Legislative Commissions Spearheaded by the African American Affairs Commission – Attended by Chair Cruz, Commissioners Ruben Rodriguez, O’Neill, & herself – Staff in attendance: Mrs. Hernandez, Rodriguez, and Cardone. Mr. Oyanadel was out sick;
- March 30th Co-Hosted by AARP CT & LPRAC – Attended by Cruz, Trueworthy Castillo, Palmares-Leaf, Ana Gonzalez. Mr. Oyanadel and Mrs. Cardone;
- April 11th – Community Conversation on Minority Teacher Recruitment organized by ConnCAN – Attended by Commissioner Palmares-Leaf – particular attention was given to LPRAC work on Bilingual Education;
- April 15th – Commissioner Ana Gonzalez’s attendance to the Hamden Regional Chamber of Commerce Business & Community Expo for Veterans and Job Fair; &
- April 1 through 15th – Hispanic Stamp Exhibit at the LOB.

Highlighted a number of requests for LPRAC to take a position regarding the Board of Regents for Higher Education decision to close the Middlesex Community College – Meriden Center, which serves a majority of minority students (53.4% out of which 31.5% are of Hispanic descent). There are media reports that indicate that regardless of what is happening in the legislature, Middlesex officials won't halt plans to close Meriden campus. A motion will be introduced during new business on this topic...

LPRAC Executive Board appointed LPRAC Commissioner George Hernandez to be our official parliamentarian.

Motion made to accept the Chairperson's report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Palmares Leaf. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Oyanadel briefed the commission on the following:

- He informed everyone that for the past three months, he has been working with the Executive Directors of the other commissions on getting funding so that we can revamp the state of the offices of LPRAC. For many of you that have been in the office, you may have noticed the carpeting, the windows and the painting is deteriorating and we have official guests, the people that are providing us potential funders, it's good to have a good work environment where we can actually conduct the business of the work. With the work that he spearheaded, he was able to attract over \$40,000 for new carpeting for the office and this funding will also impact all the commissions that sit on the second floor at 18-20 Trinity Street.
- As many of you know, the Alvin W. Penn Racial Anti-Racial Profiling Act (Public Act 99-198) prohibits racial profiling in the State of Connecticut. In specific, the law prohibits any law enforcement agency in the state from stopping, detaining, or searching motorists when the stop is motivated solely by considerations of the race, color, ethnicity, age, gender or sexual orientation of that individual. In 2012, the Connecticut General Assembly at the request of LPRAC and other groups, made several improvements to this law to address concerns regarding racial profiling in Connecticut which resulted in several changes to the law that in summary include police agencies collecting & reporting data pertaining to all traffic stops among other important changes. Last Tuesday, the full report and analysis of this data was released by the Office Policy & Management (OPM) with the support of the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy at CCSU & the Racial Profiling Prohibition Advisory Board. The findings of this research raised concerns about "significant" racial disparities in data for 10 police departments and two state police troops. (i.e., four were found to have "significant" disparities: Groton Town, Waterbury, State Police Troop C (Hartford) and Troop H (Tolland). Wethersfield, Hamden, Manchester, New Britain, Stratford, Waterbury, and East Hartford were also found to have consistent disparities that may indicate the presence of racial & ethnic bias according to the four descriptive measures used to evaluate racial & ethnic disparities.) Note: This report presents the results from an analysis of the 620,000 traffic stops during the 12-month study period from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014.

Commissioner Rodríguez said that he met with the Chief of Police in Waterbury on Friday, he's an African American. One of the things they are planning to do is have a community meeting with the Chief of Police and other polices that are going to be in the city to the public so they could come and speak out of what's going on. I know that the majority of Waterbury residents are minorities. They have to study a lit bit more on that and see what the population we have compare to what the stops are going. In talking with the Chief of Police, we have to work together and we understand the training but if the community doesn't work together with the cops, there is going to be an issue every single year. One of the things that we have to do is have meetings with different Chief of Polices or staff from the police and the community to work something out.

Commissioner O'Neill raised a number of questions regarding the methodology of the report and stated that she would like to see gender included as an independent variable going forward.

Mr. Oyanadel said that Commissioner O'Neill and our staff Orlando Rodríguez have raised a number of excellent questions about the methodology of this report that we intend to ask directly from the researchers themselves at our next commission meeting – he asked for the questions to be held until then.

Commissioner Hernández commented that Mr. Oyanadel suggested that there is training available through the federal agencies to police departments. Can you walk us through that or at least give us an insight as to how to make it available to the local police departments.

Mr. Oyanadel responded that the training is being provided the Advisory Group that is a state entity not federal. It is being provided after the researchers and the conductors of this group were trained by the Justice Department. They are certified trained to actually provide fair and impartial training. It is free of cost. If you have any local community that is interested in this training to let him know and he can ask the organizers to provide that type of training.

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

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Ana González, Chair for this Committee spoke on the following:

1. On March 30, 2015, LPRAC and AARP had a very successful event where a gathering of various community members came together and she extends her gratitude to Werner and Clarisa for attending the event as well as members of the Executive Board. This was a great outreach for LPRAC, great branding and as well an opportunity to continue collaboration with an organization that has provided support to our scholars.
2. We will be partnering with the Hartford Public Television to create "Un Minuto Latino" where we will be highlighting and featuring a celebration of Hispanic Heritage month. We will be reaching out to members of the board for their support. We will also be coordinating a campaign non-partisan approach for voting, the importance of voting as well as a video production for our promotion for our scholarship.
3. They have also decided the dates for our commission meeting out to the public. We will be meeting in Wallingford on July 15th, 2015 and in Stamford on September 16th, 2015, the locations to be announced.

Tape 2 A

4. We are also providing information to the community about the upcoming events, through different events as mentioned through the Executive Director's report, today as part of the Hamden Business Expo and Veterans Job Fair, we extended an invitation for Veterans to submit their names, bios and pictures for our Veteran's celebration which is on Wednesday, May 13th, 2015.
5. We are also preparing Press Releases internally on the Role of Government Emergency Communication for non-English speakers communities. The tentative release date is June 2015.
6. There was information disseminated about the Stamp Exhibit which came to a close today.
7. Finally, she had a brief conversation with Krista Veneziano from DPH. As you might remember, the Executive Director for DPH provided a presentation during our Meriden public hearing on Lead Poisoning. After that presentation, one of our commissioners approached her and said "What about the Latino Community?". Apparently they got a grant and they want to work with the Latino community and they have reached out to LPRAC to provide information to the Latino community about lead poisoning prevention. We will be meeting with Krista very soon, we'll be collaborating.
8. Our next committee meeting will be on May 6, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. She apologizes that this past month we had a technical glitch.
9. As per the recommendation of Commissioner Feny Taylor, it is recommended that LPRAC give a plaque to retiring Consul General of Chile, Mr. Julio Fiol Zuniga who lives in Connecticut.

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

Discussion:

Commissioner Torres offered his help on lead poisoning.

Commissioner Castro mentioned a video that her daughter did about lead poisoning and it can be put on television.

Commissioner Ana González asked if she can share the video, it has to be culturally sensitive and it can be utilized as a tool.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Quiñones reported that they had a meeting on April 7th, 2015 and the minutes are included. The important piece is that the commission should consider voting in support of SB980 An Act Concerning the Prison Gerrymandering.

Motion made to accept the Priorities & Legislation Committee report by Commissioner Palmares Leaf and seconded by Commissioner Ana González. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Torres, Chair for this Committee reported as follows:

1. The Hartford Public Library has requested from us that the Stamps be lent to them. We would like to loan the Stamps to them during the Hispanic Heritage month for two weeks but we should have a contract in place to hold them accountable for any loss or damage to the stamps and they are responsible for the safest transport of the stamps. We will have to have something drawn up to accommodate this.
2. We have the Hispanic Heritage month and we would like to board to vote to show the stamps at the LOB concourse again.
3. He needs commissioners to email him or Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández to say that they are coming to the Hispanic ceremony to be held on April 13th, 2015 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Oyanadel commented that all the stamps are certainly our responsibility and the total cost of that exhibit is over \$6,000 and we want to make sure that when we loan the exhibit that we are very careful where it is going to be exposed and the process by which they are going to move it from point A to point B is carefully carried out. It is a very significant cost. Our intern did an inventory and we found out that about 16 of them are beginning to get damaged from normal wear and tear so our plan is to begin to even change or upgrading them maybe two per year.

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

RBA COMMITTEE

Commissioner Pablo Soto reported that there was a meeting scheduled for April 13th, 2015 but it was postponed due to the need for more information and it will be rescheduled in the near future.

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

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Motion made that we support Legislation SB980 concerning prison Gerrymandering by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Arroyo.

Discussion:

Mr. Oyanadel mentioned that in Connecticut, the ex-felons did not have the rights go back and reinstated again but the Commission played a huge role in making that change and as a result, one of those states that now allow for ex-felons to vote again.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to loan the stamp exhibit to the Hartford Public Library contingent on having a contract in place with a friendly amendment that we also include instruction to the Executive Director to research the preservation and the replacement of these valuable assets. Also a friendly amendment to the friendly amendment that we draft this agreement, one of the criteria will include that we are leasing these stamps that they would secure some type of insurance including it in the contracting language that they have to have \$6,000 of insurance coverage for 25 days in the period of when we lend these out and to Display the Stamps in Hispanic Heritage month by Commissioner Torres and seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Discussion:

Commissioner Castro mentioned that the Executive Director said that we need to fix two stamps every year. Maybe we can ask for donations or we should have insurance on them.

Commissioner Hernández suggested that the Executive Director research the possibility of securing Pro Bono services from a Museum, a curator so we can preserve them for the future. We, as a commission, through the Executive Director should inquire to see how we can replace the assets. We, as a commission, through the Executive Director should inquire how we can build a fund to replace those items. He suggested a Friendly Amendment: Yes, we agree to lend out the stamp collection to the Hartford Public Library and we also include instruction to the Executive Director to research the preservation and the replacement of these valuable assets.

Commissioner Torres said that their union gets insurance for one time. Have the Library get insurance for them, its minimum insurance \$6,000 insurance for their cost for maybe \$102.00. It protects them and it protects us.

Commissioner Quiñones suggested a Friendly Amendment to the Friendly Amendment that we draft this agreement, one of the criteria will include that we are leasing these stamps that they would secure some type of insurance including it in the contracting language that they have to have \$6,000 of insurance coverage for 25 days in the period of when we lend these out.

Commissioner Torres accepted the friendly amendments.

Motion and amendments were adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to support one letter addressed to the Board of Regents with a friendly amendment to include the Governor as an addressee as a formal recipient by Commissioner Pablo Soto and seconded by Commissioner Salorio.

Commissioner Salorio said to do a separate letter to the Governor and attach a copy of the letter addressed to the Board of Regents.

Mr. Oyanadel clarified that the Senate passed it with bi-partisan support and the House was undivided but we can highlight the vote in the actual letter.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to provide a plaque or a sort of recognition in gratitude to Consul General of Chile, Mr. Julio Fiol Zuniga who lives in Connecticut for his many years of service and dedication per the recommendation of Commissioner Taylor by Commissioner Ana González and seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Discussion:

Commissioner Taylor said that she met Mr. Julio Fiol Zuniga of Chile about four years ago. At that time, he was a President of Coalition of Latin Consuls of New York and he was a key voice of making it happen that the Hispanic Community in New Haven was able to hold a roundtable discussion at Yale University and also he made it happen that all the countries had the Mobil Consul services in the State of Connecticut. At one point, only the Mexican Community was the only one being able to have the Mobil Consul services. Now you have Bolivia, Guatemala, Venezuela and Honduras that have the same services.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Commissioner Torres announced that in everyone's packages there are flyers of the fundraiser at Amarantes.

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

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares Leaf
Secretary
LPRAC Board

EPL:cjc