



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs
Commission

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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

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
February 18, 2015
Legislative Office Building Room 2D
Hartford, CT
5:30 p.m.

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

Tape 1 A

Chairman Cruz thanked everyone for coming to LPRAC's monthly meeting. He then acknowledged Paul Mounds, Jr., Director of Government Affairs in the Office of Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Paul Mounds, Jr., Director of Government Affairs in the Office of Governor Dannel P. Malloy clarified that the Legislative Commissions are active participants not only in the legislative processes across the state. We had spoken to Chairman Cruz about the necessary need for their office to come and provide updates on what they are doing, how they are doing and take back input and any comments that LPRAC may have as they go forward with providing necessary services and outreach to the constituents in the State of Connecticut. He spoke from the legislative side, what they have put forth for the Higher Education Committee – specifically in regards to institutional aid to CT Dreamers. The Governor's Office put forth two direct proposals; the first one is reducing the in-state residency requirement necessary for undocumented students to be eligible for in-state tuition rates. It will lower the requirements from 4 years to 2 years of High School level education in CT High Schools that will be a critical step. The Governor also put funding in the budget that for a merit based financial aid to undocumented students attending public institutions of higher education in CT. Mr. Mounds commended the work of LPRAC as an essential part of the legislative branch of government and expressed an interest to working with us in the near future.

Paul spoke about the Governor's legislative proposal entitled: "Second Chance Society," which aims at (1) reclassifying drug offenses to send fewer non-violent individuals to jail; (2) eliminate Mandatory Minimums for Non-Violent Drug Possession; (3) streamline parole hearings to reduce backlogs and make process more efficient and effective; (4) Streamline the Pardons Process to Give Ex-Offenders a Greater Chance at Employment; (5) Expanding Automatic Post-Prison Employment Programs; & (6) invest in supportive housing for frequent users.

Commissioner Arroyo commends Governor for Second Chance Society. He then asked on the Board of Pardons and Paroles, how many Latinos are in that board and he would like to see more representation from his community.

Paul said that he does not have the membership in front of him but will get it to his. They are in a new term and they have to do a full review of all of their boards and commissions and they have asked and encouraged LPRAC and other commissions to help bring to our attention qualified candidates for this and other top cabinet positions.

Commissioner Castillo said she works with the Bureau of Rehab Services and she works with people with disabilities and finds them employment and has been doing this for 26 years. She finds the hardest to place people that have criminal records and employers do not want to hire. We need to educate the employers and to give them the information to give that person a second chance and also with the pardon process, I have seen people that have been free from trouble for 15 years and still unable to get a pardon. We need to move the pardon process quicker so that these individuals can get jobs and other opportunities.

Mr. Mounds, Jr. said that not only have a backlog in the pardons and paroles but they also have a lack of awareness of the process. We are going to be asking the P & B board to identify and work with corrections to identify individuals who are at the point where they are eligible for applying and doing active outreach which they have never done on an active level in the State of CT. They will be moving to switch from part time to everyone full time. This is something that they are really focused on completing and starting the process of getting done.

Commissioner O'Neill said that there is a big problem of mass incarceration in our correctional facilities and it is interesting that it is called correctional because nothing is being corrected inside those walls. You should look at the sober houses as they are scams and need to be regulated. She indicated that many probation officers are not meeting on a regular basis with the released offenders that need to be looked at seriously.

Commissioner Trueworthy thanked Paul for his support to LPRAC. She wanted to comment on the small business express program and to acknowledge that the commission has previously identified how disproportionately Latino led businesses have access to funding and support through contracts, through grants, through loans, etc. from the state and so this really highlights the need to really look at that and be deliberate about the strategies and the outreaches.

Mr. Mounds, Jr. responded that 14% of the small business express has been women owned and 8% has been minority owned, those numbers are way too low. They have to do a better job of identifying those other networks where minority owned businesses; women owned businesses are associated with. We have to find different outlets. He then said that they have great respect for each other and are willing to have tough conversations with us that the conversations with us have been extremely helpful in terms of how they can better do their job. He then gave a great shout out to our Executive Director, Werner Oyanadel who he's had a great pleasure to work with in his 3 years as the Governor's Legislative Director, someone he greatly respects and someone who had done a great job that he doesn't think he gets enough credit for how well he is able to not only mobilize and work with you all but to get the Legislature to realize the important issues that are facing the Latino and Puerto Rican community.

Carlos Espinosa from the CT Students 4 a Dream said that they are here in support of State Financial Aid for Undocumented Students as you have heard news today coming from the Governor's office and also from Mr. Paul Mounds, Jr. They are here to get the official support from LPRAC and from anyone else in this building to move a legislation to be able to grant students financial aid and hopefully that you can support this bill and make this as a priority for your commission. Many talented undocumented CT High School students hope to pursue higher education but unfortunately are not able to achieve this dream because of financial barriers. In 2011, the instate tuition was passed after a long battle which had started in 2006 or 2007. It is not enough for the many students in CT. Because the undocumented students do not have social security numbers, they cannot fill out the FASFA form. CT Students for a DREAM are working on getting a different form like in California. There are currently 3 Bills in the Higher Ed Committee introduced by Ronald Lamar from New Haven, Representative Ed Vargas from Hartford and Senator Martin Looney from New Haven.

José Díaz – Graduate from New Britain High School spoke about how he wanted to pursue higher education and so when he graduated, there were no opportunities for him because he is undocumented. One of the reasons why he started to go to college is because he understands the benefits of higher education. He is currently allowed to get a work permit and therefore work his way into a community college, Capital Community College. He is now is a sophomore there and will be graduating this December.

Carlos Espinosa thanked Mr. Oyanadel for helping them the past few weeks and it's good to have him on their team.

Tape 1 B

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of January 21, 2015 by Commissioner Palmares Leaf and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Cruz thanked and commended **Vice Chair Elena Trueworthy** for taking over at the last commission meeting and she did a great, great job and he appreciates it. He then announced two new commissioners, Commissioners Dr. Ruby O'Neill and Ruben Rodríguez.

Commissioner Dr. Ruby O'Neill introduced herself stating that she is a recently retired professor, she's taught at colleges and universities in Connecticut and in New York. She has a doctorate in psychology with a specialty in developmental psychology and a doctoral certificate in women's studies and the focus of her dissertation was adolescent girls and has a special interest in adolescent Latinas. She's a founding member of the Latino

National Republican Coalition of CT and was formerly a member of the National Coalition for Family Justice and participated in public hearings and worked on numerous campaigns and she's taught a wide variety of psychology and research courses and statistics at the undergraduate end at the graduate level and is very happy to be a part of our commission.

Commissioner Ruben Rodríguez introduced himself by stating that he's been in Waterbury for 15 years, came from Puerto Rico and grew up in Chicago. He's a Field Supervisor for a contractor for Yankee Gas. He ran for State Rep. for the 72nd District, a District that is run by Larry Butler and gained 500 votes from the Latino community. He's the Chairman of the Latino National Republican Coalition and a coach of a baseball team for the 12 to 14 years old for the Police Activity League. He has a son that is leaving to be a Marine, he is 16 and already training with the Marines and probably next year he will be going into boot camp and he has two beautiful daughters. He is working with a lot of individuals from the Latino community in his district. This is the first time he is here and he learns real quickly. He is also working a lot now locally, state and at the national level too. He is looking forward to working with everyone and sees how the Latino community could benefit from our work at LPRAC in CT.

Chairman Cruz reported that Commissioner Salorio is under the weather and has been very busy with some other projects but will be coming back soon. In the meantime, on behalf of the Executive Board and himself, he would like to ask Commissioner Pablo Soto if he would like to take the Chair of the RBA Committee.

Commissioner Soto responded that he will be glad to accept the position.

Chairman Cruz informed everyone that the Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey, and thanks to our legislative efforts and legislators regarding English Language Learners, LPRAC has been asked to be part of the bi-partisan legislative taskforce on language acquisition. This taskforce will meet 4 times in the next few weeks and our recommendations will be included in the new committee bill in the Education Committee. We are happy to have our staff that's been working behind the scenes regarding this legislative effort with the Speaker's Office and also proud that Commissioner Palmares Leaf who has also been appointed on this taskforce for both LPRAC and the Brazilian Community and both her and I will be going attending these meetings. He then said that during the Executive Board meeting and we spoke about inviting our community heads to join us for our meetings. He invited everyone to join them on the next scheduled meeting at 4:30 p.m.

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Oyanadel briefed the commission on the following:

1. LPRAC during the last month has prioritized our limited resources in areas related to our 2015 legislative agenda and dealing with legislation affecting our population in the context of our legislative mandate. We are particularly happy to report that one of our main priorities this year aiming to create changes to state laws for English Language Learners (ELL) is now at the front burner of the Legislature. Last week, as result of our call-to-action Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey convened a bipartisan task force on ELLs to hear from experts on language acquisition and our board leadership Richard Cruz and Emanuela Palmares-Leaf were chosen to part of this panel – The recommendations of this panel will be included in legislation that will be further debated this session.
2. LPRAC staff also continues to receive an increasing number of requests from CT legislators, advocates, and other state officials to either inform us of their legislative priorities and or seeking advice on a broad range of issues on matters of public information/legislation. (i.e., Commissioners of DCF, DMV, AARP, CT Students for a DREAM; we also met and/or received requests from Sen. Linares, President Pro-Temp. Martin Looney, House Speaker Brendan Sharkey, Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz, Rep. Roberta Willis, Rep. Victor Cuevas, Rep. Susan Johnson, Rep. Robert Sanchez, Rep. Cathy Osten, Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Ronald Lamar, Rep. Bruce Morris, & Senator Kevin Witkos). For the record, LPRAC staff received reappointment letters for Emanuela Palmeres-Leaf, Pablo Soto and a new appointment letter for Ruben Rodriguez from Senate Minority Leader Len Fasano. **Note:** Sec. 4-1a of the Connecticut General Assembly Statutes stipulates that any appointed official of the state, including any person appointed to a board or commission shall serve until their term expire or until a successor has been appointed.
1. Furthermore, Governor Dannel P. Malloy announced on February 13th, 2015 that he selected Jorge Perez of New Haven to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Banking. With over 25 years of experience working in the banking industry, Perez currently serves as Vice President Senior Commercial Loan Officer with Liberty Bank. Prior to that, he worked at Sovereign Bank New England as the Vice President Community Banking Manager of the New Haven Exchange Branch. In addition to his work at Liberty Bank, Perez also has served on the Board of Aldermen for the City of New Haven since 1987 representing the 5th ward in the Hill neighborhood. He currently serves as the Board's President. Perez has also served as a member on the Boards of Community Action Agency and Habitat for Humanity – serving as Treasurer for both institutions – the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, and the Board of Directors of the Hill Development Corporation of New Haven, where he served as Chairman of the Special Projects Committee. The Department of Banking is responsible for protecting users of financial services from

unlawful or improper practices by requiring that regulated entities and individuals adhere to the law, assuring the safety and soundness of state chartered banks and credit unions, educating and communicating with the public and other stakeholders, and promoting cost efficient and effective regulation. Perez will begin the position on March 13. He will succeed Howard Pitkin, who retired from the position in January.

Commissioner Palmares Leaf asked about Bill 446 – what is our position regarding the domestic workers bill of rights.

Mr. Oyanadel LPRAC is fully supportive of the domestic workers bill of rights. We submitted testimony in support of Bill 446, and will continue to support it during the 2015 legislative session.

Commissioner Castillo indicated that we must ensure that the Governor himself attend our meeting as well. Also, we indicated that we must continue advocating for the Governor to support Dr. Nivea Torres as the Commissioner of Education.

Commissioner Quiñones asked will it be appropriate to request a meeting with the Governor so the Chair of this commission can articulate clearly our position with regards to the candidate that we are supporting.

Mr. Oyanadel said that he will be happy to forward the request to the Governor's Office as directed by LPRAC board of Commissioners.

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

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

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

1. We have new LPRAC Brochures in English & Spanish and thanked Commissioner Palmares Leaf for doing them in Portuguese.
2. She also spoke to Mr. Gil Martinez, Executive Director of Access TV and he is ready to work with LPRAC. He will be broadcasting the bilingual forum and he wants to get our input as to what else he can do to work with us. We are working on a tour of his facility and will keep you posted.
3. Please mark your calendar if you are available on Saturday, March 7th, 2015. LPRAC will be participating at an outreach event at the Bridgeport Public Library from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Chairman Cruz and Mr. Oyanadel will be there.
4. Public Forums – we need 2 locations during June through Dec. 2015, we are looking for recommendations.
5. One initiative for Hispanic Heritage month is highlight prominent Latinos with a quote, release it once a month through our social media outlets, not only recognizing our Latino Heritage, our Latino talent and she wants to ask for your help in providing a Latino that has been significant to you and maybe a quote. We will put it together and hopefully by April we will have it designed and ready to go and when September kicks around we will have a beautiful campaign.

Commissioner Quiñones said that you can put it on TV.

6. Website updates – we are looking to revamp it. Mr. Oyanadel, through the State, is looking for a contractor. We need your input and recommendations.

Tape 2 A

7. We are working on an Information Session on Monday, March 30th, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. there is an event at the Billings Forge in Hartford, CT that we are partnering with AARP. We need at least eight commissioners to be there.

Motion made to accept the Public Information Committee report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Quiñones said that they do have a number of action items listed which has to do with our ability to support a number of bills that had been proposed by either State Representatives or Senator. She is going to defer to Mr. Orlando Rodríguez.

Mr. Rodríguez spoke about Bills HB 5987, 6610, 398 & 6366 and the last one is ECS overfunding. In our agenda we are addressing this issue that there are certain towns in the state that are overfunded. We are speaking to Senator Bye's staff earlier today; Senator Bye is Co-Chair of Appropriations. They are getting it. One of the issues is that you have \$21mm in overfunding you take it from that group and what do you do with it. What we are suggesting is to give it half to bilingual ed and half of it to special education. But that recommendation of how to spend the money was not in the agenda. We will need your approval for that.

Commissioner Quiñones spoke of the CT Rental Program vs. Section 8 vouchers. We needed more information on that and she asked Mr. Rodríguez to come back to us at our next meeting so we can engage in a more in-depth conversation with the right information. The next one is the Second Chance. Under Other Business – we have the Drive Only License that will require people to bring birth certificate as a way of an I.D. The last piece under other business is that we have been approached by AFT and ConCam, they want to come and talk to the subcommittee regarding about their agenda. They will be attending the next Priorities & Legislation Committee meeting on March 10th, 2015 also between 5:00 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.

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

Discussion:

Commissioner Palmares Leaf clarified that the document check list requires people to bring in primary and secondary identification documents to prove that they are residents of their country of birth. One of the primary forms of identification is their passport issued from their country of birth, a consular I.D. Card which is also issued by their consular authority in the United States and third, is a Non-U.S. consular report of your birth in a foreign country.

Commissioner Arroyo mentioned that Rental Control Legislation. LPRAC may want to look into this down the road.

Commissioner Soto asked what are the valid secondary forms of identification.

Commissioner Palmares Leaf said valid unexpired motor vehicle operator's license, valid foreign voter registration card, marriage certificate issued by any state in a territory of the U.S., a certified school transcript or baptism certificate or similar document.

Commissioner Trueworthy spoke about the waiver for testing to not count it toward scores for school districts and teacher performance evaluations. When we had the bilingual education forum, this was a particular question asked. We had 120 people in attendance, it was very well attended and there was a lot of energy. This was an issue that was brought forth and we left there with bi-partisan support for this action item.

Commissioner Torres spoke about the Section 8 vouchers.

Mr. Rodríguez explained that Section 8 is Federal and is based in fair market rate. We are hoping to get more money for state rental subsidies.

Commissioner Quiñones said that when we have our retreat, there will be an opportunity to be exposed to a comprehensive level of information with all the complexities that this issue entails.

Tape 2 B

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Torres, Chair for this Committee reported the following:

1. They need a member of the board to agree to serve as Mistress or Master of Ceremonies for our Scholarship Awards Ceremony tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 5th, 2015 and the back-up date is Nov. 7th, 2015.
2. We will be kicking off a 100 campaign; we need 100 LPRAC supporters to provide \$100.00 each in support of this year's fundraiser. We hope to do this by the end of March 2015. Campaign kicks off early next week. Our fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2015 at Amarante's Sea Cliff. The deposit has been mailed already. All three applications, the Promessa Youth Scholarship, the GED Scholarship and the Community Leaders Nomination are on our website. The deadline for the submissions is June 26, 2015.
3. We are two months away from April and we have not yet heard back from OLM as to the official policy of the space at the Concourse as we want to do the Stamps.
4. The tickets for our event are being committed and should be ready for sale next week.

Motion made to accept the Special Projects Committee report by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Palmares Leaf.

Discussion:

Commissioner Soto asked if the scholarships are also sent out to the Community Colleges.

Commissioner Castillo answered yes.

Commissioner Quiñones answered Commissioner Torres question by nominating Commissioners Palmares Leaf and Ana González to be co presenters of the event on behalf of LPRAC.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

RBA COMMITTEE

Commissioner Soto said that they were supposed to have a meeting this month or March 2015 and it has been postponed until April or after that.

Mr. Rodríguez gave a brief explanation of what the Results Based Accountability is for the new commissioners.

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

Commissioner Treworthy reported that she attended a meeting on February 17, 2015 in reference to QVCC facilitated by CHRO and Superintendent Dr. García.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Motion made to approve Bills HB 5987, 6610, 398, 6366 and the last one is to recommend ECS overfunding be equally divided between program directed to related bilingual education and special education by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Ana González. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to nominate Commissioner Emanuela Palmares Leaf and Commissioner Ana González to be co presenters of the event on behalf of LPRAC by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez.

Motion made to adjourn at 8:10 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