



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs
Commission

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MINUTES
LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting
January 21, 2015
Legislative Office Building Room 2D
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. 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

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

Tape 1 A

Vice Chair Trueworthy thanked everyone for coming to LPRAC’s monthly meeting. She then acknowledged Senator Art Linares and State Representatives Minnie González and Juan Candelaria.

State Representative González stated that she was very concerned about a letter that went out supporting the candidate for Commissioner of Education. Her concern is that if she is not involved, nobody (nobody – repeated twice) is allowed to send a letter on behalf of the Black & Latino Caucus because when you say in support of the black & Latino Caucus, if you don’t have all the members involved – I don’t think a letter like that should go out on our behalf and I was very upset. I think the right thing to do is when you have an issue is to get together searching for consensus then you can send a letter. She was very disappointed when she heard about this letter because she did not have a clue in Puerto Rico of what was going on when they asked her about that – and they told her that it was LPRAC that sent a letter on behalf of all the Latinos. I will appreciate it if she knows about it because it made her very upset because it made her look stupid in front of people when she doesn’t know an issue. Next time around I would love for LPRAC to call her to tell her what is going on...

Executive Director Oyanadel clarified for the record that LPRAC did not speak on behalf of the Black and Latino Caucus or for that matter on behalf of “all” Latinos as erroneously stated by Rep. Gonzalez. LPRAC vetted a candidate for Commissioner of Education at our November meeting after receiving a request from Rep. Juan Candelaria, Chairman of the Black & Latino Caucus requesting LPRAC’s support for Dr. Nivea Torres. Once LPRAC reflected on the request, reviewed the candidate’s qualification and voted in favor of the recommendation; Then, LPRAC prepared a letter of support for Dr. Nivea Torres as directed by the LPRAC Board of Commissioners and as recommended by Rep. Candelaria. Furthermore, LPRAC, for transparency purposes, sent a copy of our written recommendation via email to all the members of the caucus in preparation for a meeting with the Governor’s Office being organized by Rep. Candelaria’s staff. Again, we could not contact Rep. Candelaria or Rep. Gonzalez for that matter since they were both out of the state at a conference in Puerto Rico at the same time this meeting was being organized.

Senator Linares welcomed the opportunity to speak before the Board of Commissioner of LPRAC and commended our guests from Brazil, Ecuador and Peru for their visit to the State Capitol. He also told us that he looked forward to reviewing LPRAC’s 2015 Legislative Agenda to see if there were areas of commonality for the upcoming session.

Vice Chair Trueworthy welcomed everyone to LPRAC’s meeting. She then asked **Board Treasurer Commissioner Yolanda Castillo** to do the roll call as **Board Secretary Commissioner Emanuela Palmares Leaf** was absent. Quorum was established. She then announced the birth of Chairman Cruz’s daughter Zada Cruz and that both mother and daughter are doing well.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Former LPRAC Commissioner Roberto Fernández spoke of his relentless work seeking educational equity and expanding access to quality educational programs to all Latino students in our state. He informed LPRAC that he was very frustrated that Latino children are not adequately served in the education system in Connecticut. As an example of his frustration Mr. Fernandez highlighted his multi-year efforts cultivating more Latino students having access to the only STEM - Science, Technology, and Mathematics – program available in a highly populated Latino region in our state, which was subsequently canceled with no explanation. He recused himself from LPRAC during the past 6 months that has taken for the CHRO to investigate this problem to avoid LPRAC from the drama that this investigation may create to allow LPRAC to focus on other important issues simultaneously being deliberated by our agency on the legislature. It was within this context that he resigned from LPRAC and is really thankful for the opportunity to have served during the time he served.

Motion made to table the resignation of former Commissioner Roberto Fernández until further information from Office of State Ethics by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

A PowerPoint Presentation was provided by Ambassador Carlos Zapata, Consul General of Peru, Ambassador Cezar Amaral, Consul General of Brazil and Minister Raul Erazo Velarde, Consul General of Ecuador about the mission of the consular corps in CT. They particularly highlighted support for our agency's legislative advocacy regarding the DMV Drive-Only program and the importance of sharing public information and the need to expand visibility for the work we all conduct in the State of Connecticut (For a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation see attachment A).

Nancy L. Pugliese, J.D. – Bureau Chief Educator Standards & Certification at the State Department of Education provided LPRAC with a presentation about their 2015 legislative agenda with changes to the bilingual statute to make it easier to increase the number of bilingual educators (For a copy of the recommendations, please see attachment B).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of December 17, 2014 by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Commissioner Trueworthy, Vice Chair reported the following:

1. The Executive Committee decided to appoint Commissioner Agnes Quiñones as Chair of the Priorities & Legislation Committee.
2. She informed the Board that in our meeting of February we are expecting the Governor's staff to attend our LPRAC board of Commissioners meeting during public participation.
3. She highlighted her participation in the Public Forum on the status of bilingual education at the State Capitol. The event was extremely successful as measured by the quality of the content of the presenters and the amount of elected officials of the Connecticut General Assembly that were in attendance – this event was sold out with over 110 participants from across the State of Connecticut. Chair Trueworthy also thanked Chairman Cruz, Gonzalez, Quiñones, Hernandez, Castillo, former Commissioners Diaz and Fernandez and LPRAC staff for their attendance and support for this event – particularly the Priorities & Legislation Committee staff. Most importantly, she mentioned a few of the outcomes of the event, which included a statement by Senator Slossberg that she will create a "place holder" for legislation at the Education Committee to include LPRAC recommendations during the 2015 Legislative Session. She also stated that Senator Boucher and Rep. Candelaria also agreed – as a result of the forum – to raise a bill together that would include standard testing results of ELL students in school and teacher performance only after the student has completed 20 consecutive months of bilingual education or ESL instruction in Connecticut.
4. She provided the Commission an update about QVCC Windham School Issue – which is to say that the CHRO on January 15 informed LPRAC that the CHRO will set up a mediation type meeting between QVCC and Windham schools to open the lines of communication and address concerns.
5. The E-Board also started to conduct research on committee board composition and review best practices on committees for Boards and Commissions as decided at our last retreat. You should expect to receive a request via email to fill out a questionnaire in the upcoming weeks. Once the E-Board finishes this research we shall present you our findings in the upcoming month.
6. She then acknowledges that State Representative Juan Candelaria is here as well as State Representative Gonzalez.

State Representative Candelaria wanted to clarify his decision of LPRAC sending a letter of support of a specific candidate for Commissioner of Education to the Governor's office where he has been told that he requested that a letter be sent and he's trying to figure out where that came from. There was a conversation with Mr. Oyanadel about supporting one specific candidate and then it's the decision of the body if they want to

support that candidate and send a letter. The point is that I do support the candidate 100%, she's the best qualified candidate and he has no issues with LPRAC supporting the candidate as she is the best candidate out there but I guess there was confusion that I made a request for a letter...

Tape 1 B

Mr. Oyanadel confirmed for the record that he received a call from Rep. Juan Candelaria, Chairman of the Black and Latino Caucus requesting the support of LPRAC for the candidacy of Dr. Nivea Torres for Commissioner of Education. Rep. Candelaria told me over the phone that he was going to seek the support of the full caucus so that he could bring a unified front with regards to this important recommendation. I told Rep. Candelaria that I needed to seek the advice of the board of LPRAC regarding his request but I would let him know of the wishes of LPRAC as soon as they vetted the candidate in the upcoming days. LPRAC ultimately approved Rep. Candelaria's candidate recommendation and a letter was sent to the appropriate officials accordingly due to the fact that the "motion" adopted by LPRAC stipulated that our recommendation be made in writing – again the letter was sent to the Governor and copied for informational purposes (FYI) to all the member of the Black & Latino Caucus.

Vice Chair Trueworthy thanked Representative Candelaria for being here to offer some clarifying statements as well as for his contribution at our very successful Bilingual Education Forum last week.

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Oyanadel briefed the commission on the following recent activities of LPRAC:

LPRAC submitted our agency's annual report to the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) as delineated by state law; coordinated a successful public forum on the status on bilingual education in Connecticut (This event was also aired by CT-N); published our agency's 2015 Legislative Agenda; received approval by the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) of the CGA to transfer \$39,000.00 from our agency's Personal Services line item to our Other Expenses (OE) line item; received front page coverage and endorsement of our legislative work on bilingual education by the Hartford Courant; met with the Governor's office several times about our agency's recommendation for Commissioner of Education and to discuss our 2015 Legislative Agenda; met with the newly appointed Commissioner of State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) about the new Drive Only State Program; met with the Black and Latino Caucus about our agency's 2015 Legislative Agenda; sent out information to the capitol press about our recognition of former LPRAC Commissioner Carlos Candal in English, Portuguese, and Spanish; provided testimony to the Judiciary Committee of the CGA for judicial nominations; and continue preparing for our 2015 LPRAC Scholarship Awards Ceremony. LPRAC is also responding to lawmakers' requests for assistance drafting legislation on previously approved LPRAC priorities; LPRAC staff is also providing feedback to the CGA Closing the Achievement Gap Task Force, Racial & Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System, Commission on Health Equity, and the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project. It is also worth noting that LPRAC's staff Mr. Rodriguez's Op Ed on the issue of decreasing population in CT was picked up by the Hartford Courant. Finally, but not least LPRAC board & Staff commends LPRAC Commissioners Emanuela Palmares-Leaf and Ana Gonzalez for helping our staff coordinate our 2014 LPRAC Holiday dinner hosted on Wednesday, Dec. 17th.

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

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Ana González, Chair for this Committee tabled her report as they have not met.

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

As there is no Chair for this Committee, report was tabled.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Torres, Chair for this Committee reported that they would like to do two events, one for Scholarships and one for Community Leader.

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

RBA COMMITTEE

Report tabled.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Motion made to approve Nominations Applications-Students with an amendment to remove the Vendor Profile Forms & Community Leaders to be posted on website on Thursday, 1/22/15 by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Hernández.

Discussion:

Commissioner Salorio asked how many community leader awards are we going to give.

Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández replied that we do a Community Service and a Lifetime Achievement; we haven't talked about the Lifetime Achievement in Committee yet. It was staff recommendation that we only do one Latino or one Latina alternate each year but the committee's desire was to do both. So they are going to try to have the Mistress of Ceremony to see that people don't monopolize the time once go up to receive their awards. So we can make the same awards, Latina, Latino Citizens, Community Service and students, the scholarships themselves. We haven't determined how many students; we'll have to see how many applications we receive and then determine if we give more money to less students or less money to more students.

Commissioner Hernández asked clarification about the Agency Vendor Form as part of the packet.

Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández responded that she did write the contract unit, the attorney and the person that processes the money and both agree that the CORE system at the Comptrollers requires this. We did get a written response.

Mr. Oyanadel mentioned that every student that has received the money has to fill out these forms. This year, we sent it to all the students in the beginning as in the past; we've had to chase them for this form.

Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández said that one of the ways to head them off at the pass is when we send the congratulatory letter, we submit those forms and say it's imperative within 10 days this has to be back or we would have to set aside their application.

Motion made to call an Executive Session by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Salorio. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to return from an Executive Session by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to approve the GED Application to be put on our website by tomorrow, January 22, 2014 by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to host two separate events, 1 major to raise funds and 1 to give scholarships to students by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to approve ticket sales amount-advancing \$100.00 per ticket this year by Commissioner Hernandez and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to approve the amount minimum to award for both regular and GED scholarships of no less than \$1,000 each made by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to authorize the contracting of Amarante's Sea Cliff as for this year's scholarship awards on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015 by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to approve the Advertising Rate sheets for 2015 by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to adjourn at 8:00 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