



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs
Commission

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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

March 18, 2015

Legislative Office Building Room 2B

Hartford, CT

5:30 p.m.

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

Tape 1 A

Chairman Cruz thanked everyone for coming to LPRAC's meeting. He then asked Commissioner Palmares Leaf to do roll call and quorum was established.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Fernando Muñiz, Deputy Commissioner at the Department of Children and Families (DCF) spoke about recent accomplishments and provided demographics of DCF related to the Latino population in Connecticut. He also pointed out for the record that he was the first recipient of the LPRAC "Promesa-Youth" Award in 1998, and then provided a comprehensive PowerPoint Presentation about improvements at DCF related to Latino children in the State of Connecticut and encouraged our two agencies to work together in the near future – particularly as it relates to recruitment of bilingual staff. Moreover, he indicated that a number of items on LPRAC's 2015 Legislative Agenda are very important to DCF. Finally, he requested that as we prepare for our 2016 legislative priorities to keep them in mind as a partner in how to improve services for the community.

Mr. Stocky Clark, Executive Director at the Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut gave a brief presentation about their mission in CT (i.e., The Ronald McDonald House of Connecticut is a "home away from home" for families of children who are being treated at nearby hospitals and other healthcare facilities such as the Children's Hospital at Yale-New Haven, Yale-New Haven Hospital, The Hospital of St. Raphael, Bridgeport Hospital. With a proper referral they will house the family of any child being treated in any nearby health facility. They offer families the opportunity to be close to their child in a supportive atmosphere. They currently have twelve bedrooms, a handicapped accessible kitchen, a dining room, and a family room with all the amenities of a home, and off street parking. They are not a hotel or a dormitory; they are a cheerfully decorated Victorian home close to Yale-New Haven Hospital, the Hospital of St. Raphael and downtown New Haven. He then introduced **Mr. Richard Popilowski, Director Capital Campaign** to inform LPRAC of their new plan to build a new house in New Haven. He told LPRAC that about 70 % of their clients are Hispanic and almost all of them are very low income. The Hospital will be donating the land and they need to raise \$10.5 million. They are coming to the Legislature for \$3 million in bonding in order to break ground next January.

State Representative André Bumgardner It is great to be with you all, he looked on the CGA website and saw that a meeting was going on. It's great to see a few familiar faces, just some folks who have been working on the ELL Taskforce and people who I met along on the campaign trail. He is Latino; his mother is from Puerto Rico and is bilingual. Her first real job was a bilingual Kindergarten Teacher in New London which she held for about 15 years and is now a Principal at the North Windham School which has a very significant Latino population and also houses a very successful Compañeros Program. He is a firm believer in dual language education, it's great to see the Legislature and the ELL Taskforces taking a key interest in proposing a pretty substantial reform and feels honored and blessed to be part of the process. It's great to be with you all. Thank you.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of February 18, 2015 by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Cruz thanked Commissioner Trueworthy for helping with the agreement of QVCC. He then spoke on the following items:

1. He reminded everyone to register for an upcoming outreach event co-hosted by AARP-CT and LPRAC on Monday, March 30, 2015 at Billings Forge in Hartford from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and informed LPRAC the promotion of Captain David Rosado to Major. Historically speaking, there was only one other major of Latino decent. The swearing-in is April 7, 2015.

Tape 1 B

2. He commended all agency staff, community guests, and LPRAC commissioners for participating at the appropriations meeting dealing with the LPRAC budget for the upcoming biennium. Chair Cruz indicated that the attendance of this hearing was significant from LPRAC supporters.
3. The work of the ELL and Education Equity Taskforce is finished. Commissioner Palmares Leaf and I attended these meetings, provided input and helped put this report together. We are waiting for the Speaker to host a press conference shortly releasing this non-partisan panel's findings.
4. Our request to meet with the Governor about Dr. Nivea Torres has not been granted. The Black and Puerto Rican Caucus met with the Governor on Monday the 16th and apparently no recommendations have been sent to the Governor by the State Education Department from which the Governor can choose to fill this position.
5. He also mentioned that he has been reviewing the LPRAC committees and there are more on one committee with very little participation. He asked that each commissioner be part of at least one committee, preferably two if you could. He said that the true work of this commission comes out of these committees. He would like to know by the next committee meeting that all new commissioners choose a committee to part of. If you can't put yourself in one place, he will assign one for you. He also indicated that he has been working with our appointing authorities on filling up our Board vacancies; he just learned that we have a new commissioner coming on board and we have three in the works. By the end of this legislative session, his goal is to have a full commission board of 21. This is so important because of all of the work that needs to be done.

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 items:

- LPRAC during the past 30 days has focused primarily on our agency's budgetary hearings (i.e., (1) organizing our community response to our budgetary hearing; (2) preparing our testimony for a number of internal budgetary hearings with Appropriations; & (3) sending a number of thank you letters to all our supporters.) We are also tracking a broad number of legislative proposals currently moving through the legislative process, coordinating our agency's testimonies in accordance with the priorities determined by the Board of Commissioners for the 2015 Legislative Session, and responding to legislative requests from lawmakers in a number of topics related to our mandate. It is important to note that the ECS funding issue identified as a priority this year is a hot topic being discussed by a number of legislators in Hartford.
- LPRAC staff at the request of the Board of Commissioners last month reached out to the Governor's Office to request a second meeting with the Governor's Office regarding Dr. Nivea Torres – our agency's recommendation for Commissioner of Education. Unfortunately, we are still pending a response to our request. The Governor is currently in vacation in Puerto Rico but we expect to get a response to our request within the next few days. Keep in mind that the Governor through his Chief of Staff already met with LPRAC and a delegation of legislators and Community Leaders regarding this topic. LPRAC staff also made contact with the Board of Education and is currently seeking support for our recommendation from our colleagues at the AAAC and the PCSW.
- The English Language Learners & Educational Equity Task Force Report to Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey was finalized on Friday, March 6, 2015. LPRAC provided input to this endeavor by Chairman Richard Cruz and LPRAC Commissioner Emanuela Palmares-Leaf. The full final report with their findings will be released shortly at a press conference at the LOB. The date for this event, unfortunately, is not available at the time this report is being prepared.
- Working with DMV Officials testing their new State of Connecticut Mobile app (iPhone, iPad or Android) for practice tests in Spanish for a driver's licenses in CT. (i.e., knowledge test questions, quiz on teen drivers)

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

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

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

1. We are partnering with Hartford Public Access TV and on Friday, March 20, 2015 at 2:00 p.m., they will be given a tour of the TV station at 20-28 Sargeant Street, Hartford, by their Executive Director Gil Martinez;
2. On March 30, 2015 at 2:00 p.m., LPRAC is partnering with AARP doing a Volunteer Information Session for AARP at Billings Forge in Hartford, CT. Please let her know if you would like to attend. You do have to register. Commissioners Castillo and Trueworthy said that they will attend.
3. We were informed in addition to the staff who did an amazing job providing outreach of stakeholders to testify during the event on 3-5-15. As reported through the Executive Director and the Chairman, the event was a huge success. This committee would love to commend Commissioners Cruz, Trueworthy, O'Neill, Palmares Leaf and Rodríguez for staying late during this hearing for advocating for LPRAC and making our commission heard. Thank you very much for your support.
4. She also wanted to acknowledge that LPRAC staff and Chairman Cruz participated in an outreach event in Bridgeport on March 7th, 2015 at the request of the Greater Bridgeport Latino Network. This event was very successful and copies of LPRAC documents were disseminated.
5. She then thanked Commissioner Palmares Leaf for translating the LPRAC Brochure into Portuguese.
6. The deadline to obtain inspirational quotes from Latino Leaders is Wednesday, April 15, 2015. That way when Hispanic Heritage month comes, it won't be Mexican Heritage month because the only quoted given now is by Mexican.
7. We are working in collaboration with the Health Commission on a new outreach project called "I-Speak Cards". This project was first initiated by the Asian Pacific Commission but now through this collaboration and Federal Grant we will be providing these I-Speak cards in Spanish and Portuguese. The entire goal is if a person needs healthcare, they go to a hospital and they don't speak English, they show the I-Speak Spanish, I-Speak Portuguese card indicating that please provide me with a qualified interpreter. It will have the LPRAC logo, it's a great outreach for the commission and we are being asked to provide assistance with translation.
8. The committee recommends that our two community events between June through December be held in the cities of Stamford, CT and Wallingford, CT.
9. Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 8th, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

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

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Quiñones spoke on the following:

1. She thanked Mr. Orlando Rodríguez for emailed everyone this information. She reminded everyone that until session ends (June 4th, 2015) we may have instances in which you are going to get an email out of scheduled meetings with information about proposed legislation that very well may impact our community. She spoke to Mr. Orlando Rodríguez Tuesday afternoon and he said there is a proposed legislation regarding Charter Schools and that we should take a position on this. She gave a copy of the raised bill and put a one pager- CT has spent an incredible amount of dollars in investing in Charter Schools throughout the State. There is not an implemented, executed accountability system for Charter Schools in the State of CT.

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

Discussion:

Commissioner Castro spoke about seniors and Generators. She would like to express her desire and the need for LPRAC to look at the agenda as well of the seniors when we look at the legislative piece of it. She believes that seniors need to be represented in the State of CT more, but more of the Commission would be great. On Friday, March 20th, 2015 at 12:30 p.m. there will be at a public hearing in the Environmental Committee and it looks like it's going to move. It is going to be a proposal to listen to testimony to increase the farmers' coupon from 18 to 21.

Tape 2 A

Commissioner Castro continued saying that it would make a difference if we can send a letter of support.

Motion was adopted by voice vote.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

As Commissioner Torres, Chair for this Committee is absent, Commissioner Castillo reported as follows:

1. Fundraising – we have a 100/100/100 campaign going on in support of this year’s scholarship fundraiser scheduled for Saturday, October 17th, 2015. The staff reached out to each of them so let’s support the effort whether through our own contribution or by providing the staff additional names for the outreach.
2. Music – We contacted four potential bands – two did not respond and two did. We are recommending contracting with Orchestra Afinke for \$1,200 which is the lowest of the bids we received.
3. Latino History Month display - OLM has given us the clearance to hang our Stamp Collection from April 1st through April 15th, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. We hope that each of you can get here by 4:30 p.m. on the day of our April Board meeting so that we can all join the staff downstairs in a small ceremony to take down the stamp display.
4. Ninth Annual Tribute to Hispanic Veterans – The theme will be Vietnam’s 50th Anniversary and we ask that all of you make every effort to attend on Wednesday, May 13th, 2015 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the State Capitol’s North Lobby.
5. Hispanic Heritage Celebration will be held on Tuesday, September 15th, 2015 and we will be celebrating one of two countries and the selected country is Brazil.
6. Board and Staff Retreat, given the budget situation, we have requested that Commissioner Palmares Leaf help us to coordinate the hosting of the retreat at the Portuguese Center in Danbury, CT on September 12th or 19th, 2015.
7. Facilitator – At first we were considering a Board or Staff member to facilitate but it will not be fair to either as we want all to be engaged with the strategy plan of action for the agency. Having said that, the staff is involved in reaching out to a management and culturally confident professional to facilitate for us the whole, the cost of the mileage and cost of the meal.

Motion made to accept the Special Projects Committee report by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy.

Discussion:

Chairman Cruz announced that on Wednesday, March 25th, 2015 there is a Meet & Greet of Commissioners and Staff of the Connecticut General Assembly Legislative Commissions, it’s a big pow wow between us, Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, Commission on Aging, Commission on Children, LPRAC, and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women being hosted by African American Affairs Commission. All Commissioners are invited and encouraged to attend that event.

RBA COMMITTEE

Tabled

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Cruz spoke of the Tribute to the Hispanic Veterans flyers – please take some and bring them to VFW places. He then asked if it’s only for Vietnam veterans.

Commissioner Castillo responded that it all veterans.

Chairman Cruz asked if they are going to get coins.

Commissioner Castillo responded not that she knows of.

Commissioner Trueworthy requested that the staff provides an update on the Interpreter Bill. I-Speak

Motion made to do a letter of support to Ronald McDonald House to get funds by Commissioner Castro and seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to host two public meetings in Stamford and Wallingford by Commissioner Ana González and seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Tape 2 B

Motion made to send a letter of support to the Committee of Environmental for the State of CT in support of the Farmer’s Market Bill #5734 including from \$18.00 to \$21.00 increase in the farmers vouchers by Commissioner Castro and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made that we provide testimony in support of HB 1096 – An Act Concerning Charter Schools by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Discussion: A significant discussion took place both in support and against HB 1096 by several board members of LPRAC.

Motion carries as follow:

6 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Castro, Ana González, Quiñones, Salorio and Trueworthy

5 Nays: Commissioners Arroyo, Jay González, George Hernández, O'Neill and Soto

1 Abstentions: Commissioner Palmares Leaf

3 Absent: Commissioners Taylor, Torres, and Rodriguez (left the meeting – conference call - before vote)

Motion made to have the LPRAC Retreat on 9-12-15 by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Quiñones. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Motion made to adjourn at 8:25 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