

State of Connecticut Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission



2008 Annual Report

Mission Statement

To coordinate and facilitate access to resources by developing and recommending to the Governor and the Legislature policy for the advancement of the Latino & Puerto Rican communities.

Table of Contents



Chairman's Report	1
Commissioner Biographies.....	3
Special Projects/Activities.....	10
2007 End of Session Report.....	14
2007 Legislative Agenda.....	17
Participation and Speaking Engagements.....	18
Budget.....	20
LPRAC Information.....	23

Chairman's Report

As the voice of Connecticut's diverse Latino communities, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission takes pride in its continued ability to effectively represent their interests within the legislature and cultivate positive relationships with leaders and organizations to help improve the lives of thousands of state residents.

We began the year by setting an aggressive legislative agenda designed to address the sometimes harsh realities faced by Latinos in Connecticut in the areas of education, economic development and opportunity, health, housing, the judicial system, and immigration. We then actively pursued change, on and off the floor of the legislature.

The shorter legislative session also afforded the LPRAC an opportunity to focus more of its attention to growing its sphere of influence within the state's Latino communities by developing new relationships with the organizations that serve them and fostering pre-existing ones. To that end, the LPRAC continues to actively serve on boards and advisory committees for various organizations and initiatives including:

- Civil Rights
- HealthFirst Connecticut
- Rebuilding Together Hartford
- Tu Voto Si Cuenta, Latino Voter Registration Drive
- Hispanic American Veterans of Connecticut (HAVOCT)
- Connecticut Renewal Team

Furthermore, during the 2008 legislative session we made our voices heard in support of:

- Universal pre-school education
- Universal health care legislation
- Medical interpreters and linguistic access in emergency hospitals
- Strengthening anti-predatory lending laws and foreclosure assistance
- Court interpreters
- Earned income tax credit

In October and November of 2007 we began conducting research into the socio-economic status of the state's Latino residents in partnership with the Center for Research and Public Policy. The results were compiled, studied internally and released during a press conference in March of 2008. The study shed light into the needs of the state's Latino population and serves as both the basis of the Commission's work moving forward and a point of reference for anyone interested in working with this segment of the population.

In January, the LPRAC continued its partnership with the Secretary of States Office to design and construct a statewide campaign to increase Latino civic engagement and register 10,000 new Latino voters. Though the campaign's results would not be known until shortly after the November 2008 election, LPRAC staff served as key members of the steering committee that set the framework for it's eventual success.

At the same time, the Commission began work on an event that would bring together foremost experts in housing, economics and policy to address the ever-worsening housing crisis and its impact on minority populations. Though the event would be realized in July of 2008, I would be remiss if I did not mention the amount of work that the Commission put into its planning and execution during this fiscal year.

This year we also hosted our Tenth Annual LPRAC Gala Awards Ceremony to honor the best and brightest that our communities have to offer. This year, we were not only able to recognize the achievements of prominent professionals and people dedicated to the Latino community, but we provided scholarships to six promising Latino students.

In this report you will find information on all of our projects and activities as well a comprehensive report prepared by our Principal Legislative Analyst detailing our legislative activities during the previous session. As we head into the New Year, we look forward to the challenges that lay ahead and we will continue to work diligently for the advancement of Latinos in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos Alvarez', followed by two small dots.

Carlos Alvarez, Chairman
State of Connecticut Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

Biographies

Carlos Alvarez, Chairman

(Arts and Culture) - A native of Cuba, Mr. Alvarez has a long, successful history as an entrepreneur and manager of two medical-based businesses that provide financial opportunities and employment in the community. Mr. Alvarez has solid skills in financial management, general business operations and human resources. He has a long history of community involvement and is fully Bilingual in Spanish and English, and possesses strong negotiation skills and strengths in organizational management. He is the current owner and Chief Operating Officer of Evis Respiratory Services and Medical Equipment based in Hartford, CT. He is an executive board member of the Spanish American Merchants Association as well as a Director for Hartford Youth's Scholars Foundation. He resides in West Hartford with his wife and two children.



He was appointed to the Commission by former Senate Minority Leader Louis C. DeLuca in March of 2005.

Sonia Ayala, Vice Chairperson

(Housing) Born in Corozal, Puerto Rico, Sonia came to Hartford in 1959 at the age of five, with both parents and four sisters. She has been a single parent to five children, two boys and three girls and currently has eleven grandchildren. A graduate of Hartford Public Schools, she briefly moved to Massachusetts where she graduated from Broms Beauty Academy and Broms Barber Academy. She taught Barber school briefly before becoming a salon owner. Growing up, she lived in apartment buildings with absentee landlords who were unresponsive to tenants' needs, so she felt the need to get involved. Shortly after becoming involved in housing issues she became a member of the West End Civic Association (WECA). Since 1999, she has served as an advocate and co-chair for the housing committee.

Sonia has worked with city officials and the state attorney's office to target problem properties and worked to pass The Heat Surcharge Legislation Bill and The Landlord Identification Bill, that prevents property owners from hiding behind a post office box. She attends The National People Conferences annually, in Washington, D.C., to stay on top of issues in housing, community policing, racial profiling, predatory lenders, the community reinvestment act and abandoned properties. Sonia also served on the board of the Parkville NRZ from August 2000 to March 2004, and as co-chair of the governance board of Breakthrough Charter School from 1998 to 2003 during which time the school became a Magnet school.

She was appointed to the Commission on February 1, 2003 by then Speaker of the House Moria K. Lyons and subsequently by the Speaker of the House, James A. Amann.

Pablo Rivera, Treasurer



(Public Safety) Born in Santurce, Puerto Rico. Pablo Rivera has been a resident of Waterbury, Connecticut for almost twenty-two years. He and his wife Nancy M. Rivera are raising their 3 children, Joshua, Jonathan and Melitza. Mr. Rivera holds a Bachelors Degree in Human Services from Springfield College, and a Master in Education from Cambridge College. Mr. Rivera has been a Family Intervention Strategist for The Early Childhood Education Program for over ten years in the Waterbury Public Schools, as well as a Spanish Teacher for Adult Education Program. He also worked at United Way/ Infoline as a counselor, and The Head Start Program as a Family Social Service Worker. Mr. Rivera is also serving as a Consultant for The W.Y.S. School Readiness Program and Y.M.C.A. Readiness Program.

Mr. Rivera is currently a member of the following organizations:

- National Member of the Board of Directors Title 1 Program
- State Member of the Board of Director Title 1 Program
- Parent As a Teacher Program by State of Connecticut
- South End Neighborhood Association

The Following are just some of the organizations and activities he has recently been involved with:

- Member of the Naugatuck Valley Community Development
- Member of the Board of Directors of the Spanish Action Council
- Member of the Board of Directors Nilsa Marrero Cooperative
- Member of the Board of Hispanic Student Union at Naugatuck Valley College
- Member of the Board New Opportunity for Waterbury

He was appointed to the Commission in October 2005 by James A. Amann, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ivette Servera, Secretary



(Small Business and Economic Development) of Farmington, works for the State of Connecticut Judicial Department, Adult Probation, at the Bristol office. She attended Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work with a minor in Sociology. Ms. Servera is a member of many community organizations including: past President of Handicapped Children of Puerto Rico, Bridgeport; La Danza, Bridgeport; Executive Board of Boys Scouts; President of La Casa De Puerto Rico; Leadership Greater Hartford –Marketing and Education Committees; 2nd President of Hartford Lions Club; ASPIRA Hartford effort; Hispanic Journalists Association; Connecticut Probation and Parole Association; and Republican Hispanic Women's Task Force. She volunteers with the American Red Cross on the Disaster Action Team and is a Community Liaison Volunteer. She is currently a board member with the United Way.

Former Governor John G. Rowland appointed Ms. Servera to LPRAC in 1999 and 2003, and reappointed by Governor M. Jodi Rell in 2007

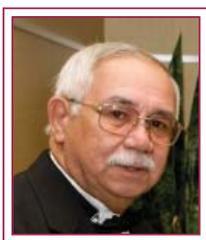
Manuel García, Past Chairman



(**Human Services**) was born and raised in Bridgeport. He is an employee for the City of Bridgeport Board of Education as an In-School Suspension Officer. He previously worked as a Controls Supervisor with many years of service in customer relations experience both in the United States and Puerto Rico. He is an active member of the community and is the Pastor of Iglesia Renacer Inc., located in Bridgeport. He provides religious service at the Danbury Federal Correctional Center for Latina inmates. Mr. García has and continues to serve on various boards. He serves on the Board of Directors for Free Forever Prison Ministries in New Haven, CT. Mr. García has served with various organizations including Chaplain with the Fairfield County Sheriffs Department of Connecticut, religious service provider at the New Haven Correctional Center, Associate Minister of Mission Good Shepherd Church, Inc. Milford, CT; a former Vice President of the Third Stone Ridge Co-op Board of Directors, The Bridgeport Republican Town Committee; Justice of the Peace in the City of Bridgeport, a former Vice President of the South End Community Center and a member of the Royal Rangers, instructing boys and men in religious and moral values.

He was appointed to the Commission in 1997 by former Governor John G. Rowland and re-appointed in 1999.

Ramón L. Arroyo, Commissioner



(**Public Citizen**) of Hartford, was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology; a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Connecticut. Mr. Arroyo after 23 years of service retired from the City of Hartford Municipal Government as a Special Assistant to the City Manager. He has been very actively involved in all political elections throughout the years by working closely with the political leaders of the City of Hartford and the State. In the past he has participated and volunteered in different organizations. The following is a list of the memberships he has held:

- Friends of Pope Park
- Hartford, Roberto Clemente's Little League, Inc.
- Parkville Problem Solving Committee
- Hartford Public Access Television
- Capital Area Substance Abuse Council
- Hartford's Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- Hogar CREA of Connecticut State Steering Committee Member
- Hartford's Charter Revision Commission
- Frog Hollow Neighborhood Recreation Council
- Boys Scouts of America, Long River's Council, Inc.,
- Quirk Middle School
- Asylum Hill Organizing Project
- Maria Sanchez Baseball Little League
- West Middle School
- Neighborhood Legal Services
- Hartford Democratic Town Committee
- Hartford's Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- Puerto Rican and Latino Alliance of Connecticut
- Hartford's Charter Revision Commission
- Hartford, Puerto Rican Political Action Committee

Originally appointed by House Majority Leader David Pudlin appointed Mr. in 1999, he has since been re-appointed by then former Majority Leader James A. Amman and most recently by House Majority Leader Chris Donovan.

Luis A. Menéndez, Commissioner



(**Transportation**) of Hartford, was born in Havana, Cuba. In 1966 Mr. Melendez fled Cuba with other members of his family and was then joined in the United States by his father in 1969. After graduating from Penney High School in East Hartford he continued his education in Manchester Community College and Central Connecticut State University where he received his degree in Business Administration. Mr. Menéndez is now employed in his family business, *GLTU Company Cabinet Distributors*. Mr. Menéndez plays an active role in the Hartford Community in volunteering for many political functions as well as being a board member of SAMA, The Spanish Merchants Association. He is most proud of his wonderful family, his spouse Gladie and his two lovely daughters Vanessa and Cristina.

He was appointed to the Commission in 2003 by former House Minority Leader Robert M. Ward.

Alcides Ortíz, Commissioner



(**Public Citizen**) of Hartford, was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He has lived in Hartford for over 30 years. After graduating from Hartford Public High School, he maintained a full-time job as a machinist while attending Capitol Community College where he studied Business Management.

He is currently the Supervisor of Training at CTTRANSIT. Mr. Ortíz is a certified Transit Ambassador Facilitator and has been certified as an instructor by the Transportation Safety Institute of the U.S. Transportation Administration.

When not at work during the summer months Mr. Ortíz spends most of his time coaching baseball.

He was appointed to the Commission in 2003 by former House Minority Leader, Robert M. Ward.

Ed Rodríguez, Commissioner



Ed is a founding Partner, and President of Sandoval Associates, LLC. Sandoval Associates is a world-class, full service management-consulting firm serving clients in all areas of business management and value creation. He has over 27 years of international sales/marketing, internal controls, process facilitation and training, and general management experience in both profit and nonprofit sectors. He has held executive management positions and consulted for firms such as Union Carbide Corporation, 3V Incorporated, Verizon, and Motorola. Ed brings a “real world and practical approach” to consulting with a focus on “results and accountability”.

Ed is a recognized expert on a range of subjects such as strategic planning, diversity, business development, and ethnic marketing/communications. He has facilitated and lectured on these topics at symposiums and conferences all over the nation including the Dolan School of Business, Hispanic Support Organization, CMSDC Trade Expo, and USHCC.

Mr. Rodríguez has a Bachelors of Science in Chemical Engineering from the University of Puerto Rico. He also holds an MBA from Dolan School of Business, at Fairfield University, and is a graduate of Union Carbide’s Executive Management Program. Ed has served on the boards of the Music and Arts Center for Humanity (MACH), Hispanic Merchants Association, Connecticut Minority Supplier Development Council (CMSDC), Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation Distribution board (GBAF), and Minority Business Enterprise-Center for Joint Ventures, among others.

Finally, Ed is an active member of the Stratford, CT community where he and his wife Vivian reside with their two children, Eddy and Patricia.

He was appointed to the Commission in 2007 by former Senate Minority Leader Louis C. Deluca.

LPRAC Staff



L to R: Principal Legislative Analyst Werner Oyanadel, Executive Secretary Clarisa Cardone, Public Information Officer Karlo Ruiz, and Special Projects Coordinator and Grants Writer Lucy Goicoechea Hernandez

Norma Rodríguez-Reyes, Commissioner



Norma has been a resident of New Haven since the age of 5. Despite very humble beginnings, her family always believed in education and hard. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Connecticut with a major in Spanish and a minor in Biology. She has 3 sons: Tomás, a UCONN graduate, Andre a Quinnipiac University graduate, and Juan Carlos, who is in the U.S. Air force currently stationed in New Mexico. She is the owner of La Voz Hispana de Connecticut, one of Connecticut's largest Spanish-language news weeklies circulating throughout the 9 cities with the highest concentration of Latinos. La Voz Hispana speaks to over 125,000 consumers every week. She was the Director of the Atwater Senior Center of the City of New Haven for approximately 25 years where she planned, organized, directed, and controlled programs and services for over 1,200 senior citizens. She is a Vice-Chair of the New Haven Democratic Committee and was the first Hispanic to serve as a State Central Committee Member from 1984-1988. She is a certified moderator and a former Assistant Registrar for the 4th Ward. From 1995-1997 she served as a member of the Board of Directors for LULAC Headstart, a program that focuses on the educational needs of children. She served as a Secretary of the Board of Directors for the Latino Youth Development, an organization with programs geared toward Latino youth and their families. She has coordinated fund raising events to give scholarships to students entering colleges and universities through the Star of Jacob Scholarship Fund. Presently Norma mentors an 8th grader from Saint Rose School at Yale New Haven Hospital and serves as a board member for SAMA, the Spanish American Merchants Association.

Ms. Rodríguez-Reyes was appointed to the Commission in 2003 by Senate Majority Leader Martin M. Looney.

Maritza Tirú, Commissioner



(**Education**) of Waterbury, is the Director of Career Development and Placement at Naugatuck Valley Community-Technical College in Waterbury. She has taught English as a Second Language at the college. She has a Master's Degree from the University of Connecticut. Ms. Tirú is well known in the community and is very involved in many local organizations, including: the Chamber of Commerce – Waterbury Leadership Program, Community Vision for Waterbury, Vice-Chair of the Educational Task Force, Literacy Volunteers of America – Waterbury Chapter, Mayor's Task Force Against Drugs, Spanish Action Council – Past President 1992-1994, School-Based Health Center Planning Committee, American Red Cross – Waterbury Chapter. Waterbury PRIDE-N.A.A.C.P., CT Trails Girls Scout Council, Get Them Off Program (GTOP), Minority Empowerment Coalition – Vice-President, Northwest Collaboration Committee, UCONN Advisory Board, Waterbury Area Services Team, The Displaced Homemaker Program Advisory Board and Youth Advocacy Association of Greater Waterbury. Ms. Tirú was recently selected to serve a two-year term to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She is also the student advisor to the Black Student Union and the Hispanic Student Union at the college.

Ms. Tirú was first appointed to the Commission in 1995 and reappointed in 1996, 1999 and 2004 by former Governor John G. Rowland.

The Commission Shall:

1. Review and comment on any proposed state legislation and regulations that would affect the Latino and Puerto Rican populations in the state and provide to the members of the General Assembly copies of any such comments
2. Advise and provide information to the Governor on the state's policies concerning the Latino and Puerto Rican communities
3. Advise the Governor concerning the coordination and administration of state programs serving the Latino and Puerto Rican populations
4. Maintain a liaison between the Latino and Puerto Rican communities and governmental entities, including, but not limited to, the General Assembly
5. Encourage Latino and Puerto Rican representation at all levels of state government, including state boards and commissions, and maintain an accessible list of prospective appointees who are members of the Latino or Puerto Rican community
6. Secure appropriate recognition of the accomplishments and contributions of the Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state
7. Work in consultation with the joint committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to legislative management for the purpose of establishing a plan of short-term and long-term initiatives based on the needs of the Latino and Puerto Rican community and
8. Prepare and submit to the Governor an annual report concerning its activities with any appropriate recommendations concerning the Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state and submit a copy of the report to the joint committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to legislative management, which committee shall distribute a copy of the report to each member of the General Assembly

(Excerpt from Section 2-120(c), Chapter 23d of the Connecticut General Statutes.)

Special Projects and Activities

Sponsor Recognition Ceremony

On October 5, 2007, the LPRAC held a ceremony to recognize those with the vision and dedication to establish and support the creation of a Commission for the advancement of the Latino community in the state of Connecticut.

The event honored the Commission's founding board members Ramón Alfonso, Manuel Díaz, Yasha Escalera, Evelyn Mantilla, Efraín Rosado, Américo Santiago, Ramón Serbia (R.I.P.), Maritza Tirú, Salvador Vázquez, and Dr. Alberto J. Rodríguez, and longtime sponsors Bank of America and GlaxoSmithKline.

Both groups were celebrated for their contributions over the past 13 years and for their willingness to act in the face of adversity to address the overwhelming need present in our communities. Since the Commission was established, Bank of American and GlaxoSmithKline have contributed more than \$50,000 to sponsor LPRAC events and activities.

Tribute to Hispanic Veterans

The LPRAC is dedicated to securing proper recognition of Latino contributions to the state and the country both in times of peace and in times of war.

In that effort, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission held its second Annual Tribute to Hispanic Veterans on May 8, 2008, honoring Latino members of all branches of the armed forces.

With thousands of Latinos proudly serving in foreign theaters, it was more important than ever to tell the story of their courageous service in defense of the United States so that it serve as an inspiration to those who follow and will one day continue the proud Latino heritage in the armed forces.

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

For the fourth consecutive year, the LPRAC, joined the United States Postal Service in presenting the Hispanic Heritage Postage Stamp Exhibit. The collection, which pays tribute to people, places and events of cultural significance not only to the Latino community but to the nation at large, was on display in the concourse of the Legislative Office Building from September 4 to September 28, 2007.

The exhibit proudly displays how deeply Latinos are woven into the fabric of this country. Roberto Clemente. The Alamo. Frida Khalo. Cesar Chavez. Desi Arnaz. These names are as much a part of American history as they are Latin American History and this year, the commission took it one step further by taking the exhibit on tour across the state.

The LPRAC continues to be the only organization in the United States building and displaying such a culturally relevant exhibit of postage stamps.



Commissioner Maritza Tirú is honored for her dedication.



Mendez v. Westminster stamp, honoring landmark school desegregation case



Principal Legislative Analyst Werner Oyanadel, Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz and a Tu Voto Si Cuenta campaign volunteer.

The Commission's 24-stamp collection includes:

- Spanish American War
- Southwest Settlement
- Padre Felix Varela
- Cinco de Mayo
- Salsa
- Merengue
- Ponce de Leon
- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Luis Muñoz Marín
- Puerto Rico Election
- Mexican Independence
- Mendez v. Westminster
- Desi Arnaz
- Panama Canal
- Hispanic Americans
- Roberto Clemente
- Cesar Chavez
- Frida Kahlo
- Cha-Cha-Cha
- Mambo
- Ritchie Valens
- José de San Martín
- The Alamo
- Settlement of Florida



For use as an educational tool and source of cultural pride, the Commission loans the collection, free of charge, to schools across the state. To date, the exhibit has been displayed at Eastern CT State University, Post University, Maria Sanchez Elementary School in Hartford and The Sound School in New Haven.

Latino Voting Summit/"Tu Voto Si Cuenta" Campaign

The LPRAC was a collaborator and active participant in the 2007 Latino Voting Summit hosted by Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz. The event served as a launch point for a discussion on Latino civic engagement ahead of the 2008 Presidential election and as the basis for 2008's "Tu Voto Si Cuenta" Latino voter registration campaign. Following the Summit, the Commission continued to work closely with the Secretary of State's Office as a partner in the campaign, helping to draw the participation of other Latino leaders and organizations for the Steering Committee and having its staff members chair various sub-committees that helped shape the direction of the campaign.

With a goal of registering 10,000 new Hispanic voters, the campaign focused its efforts on the largest Latino populations in the state - Bridgeport, Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, New Haven, New Britain, Manchester, Meriden, Norwalk, Stamford, Stratford and Waterbury. With a clear message and a well-funded marketing strategy, incorporating both English and Spanish language media, the campaign was expected to surpass expectations.

LPRAC Housing Summit

In January of 2008, the LPRAC began planning an event that would help to shed light on the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on the state's Latino and minority populations. "*Connecticut Families in an Ailing Market, A Summit on Housing*" would bring together the foremost minds in housing, banking, policy and the economy, to examine the root causes of the housing and mortgage crisis, its effect on minority populations and the state's economy, and possible solutions.



LPRAC Commissioner Ed Rodriguez puts the findings of the Socio-Economic Study in perspective for those in attendance.



LPRAC Commissioner Ed Rodriguez, Chair Carlos Alvarez and Fernando Betancourt at the Socio-Economic Study press conference.



Jerry Lindsley of the Center for Research and Public Policy presents the findings of the LPRAC Socio-Economic Study.

The event, to be held July 30, 2008, would be geared around a series of panel discussions featuring participation and presentations from:

- State Representative Kenneth P. Green (D-1st District)
- State Representative Kelvin Roldan (D-4th District)
- Judge Nelson Diaz, former HUD General Counsel
- Luis Caban, SINA Executive Director
- David Fink, Policy and Communications Director, Partnership for Strong Communities and the Lyceum
- Erin Kemple, Executive Director, Connecticut Fair Housing Center
- Raphael Podolsky, attorney, Legal Assistance Resource Center
- Carol Heller, Senior Vice President and Community Impact Manager, Bank of America
- Jeff Blodgett, Vice President of Research, Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC)
- Howard F. Pitkin, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Banking
- Bill Cibes, Chairman of the Steering Committee for the HOMEConnecticut Coalition
- Kyle D. Anderson, Director of Homeownership Programs, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain
- Karen Santana, Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)
- Rob Simmons, Connecticut Business Advocate
- Marlyn Miranda, Director of Education and Realty Services, Mutual Housing

LPRAC Socio-Economic Study

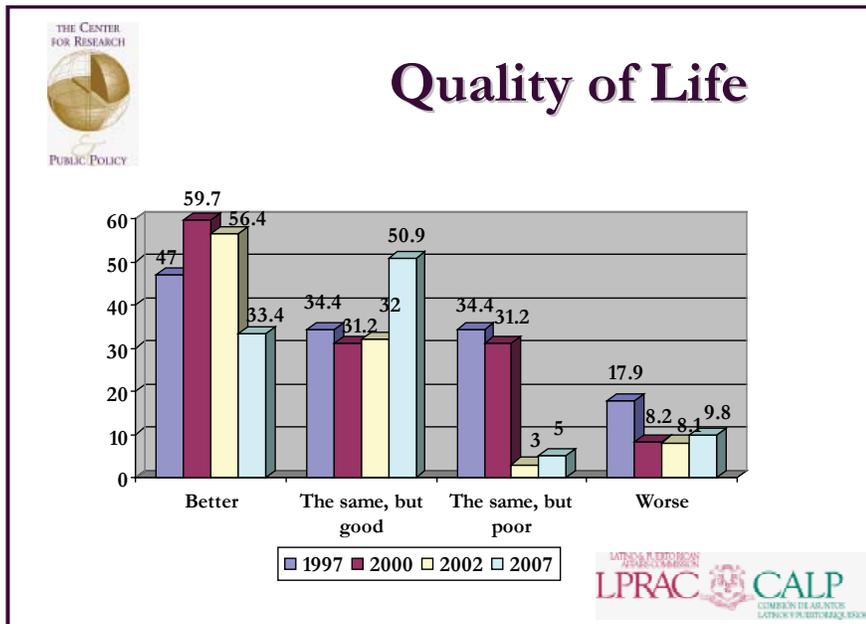
Before a room full of community leaders and concerned members of the public, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission announced the findings of the its fourth and most comprehensive Socio-Economic Study* on February 26, 2008.

Gathered through surveys of 800 adult Latino residents, 200 Hispanic leaders, three focus groups and 50 in-person interviews with Latino youth, the study details the needs of their communities and the challenges they face regarding quality of life, health care, housing, education, employment and the judicial system.

The study received extensive local and national media coverage much of which served to shed light on the ongoing problems Latinos face in Connecticut. The results of the study will serve as the platform for the development of the LPRAC's Legislative Agenda in 2009 and beyond.

* Copies available upon request.

Key Findings of the LPRAC Socio-Economic Study



- Latino adults reporting that their quality of life is better today than just two years ago have declined from 56.4 percent in 2002 to 33.4 percent in 2007.
- The percentage of Latino residents who believe housing is affordable dropped significantly from 74.5 percent in 2002 to 51.5 percent in 2007.
- Thirteen percent of respondents currently work two jobs. That figure is nearly double the 7.5 percent that reported working multiple jobs in 2002.

- Although 89 percent of Latinos surveyed reported having a primary care physician, 18.4 percent indicated that there was a time in the previous 12 months when they needed medication but could not afford to purchase it.
- Respondents currently utilizing the HUSKY Program gave the health care plan positive marks at a rate of 85.5 percent.
- Latinas reporting having a mammogram within the last two years rose impressively from 47.8 percent in 2002 to 69.1 percent in 2007.
- Computer familiarity among Latinos rose from 75 percent to 78.6 percent, making them one of the most computer literate segments of the population.



* Copies available upon request.

10th Annual LPRAC Gala Awards Ceremony

On Saturday, October 27, 2007, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission celebrated its 10th Annual Gala Awards Ceremony at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville, Connecticut.

The event brought together more than 800 guests from throughout the state to recognize the Latino community's best and brightest, and celebrate the achievements of leaders, organizations and students.

The event, hosted this year by Fox 61's Laurie Perez, has become one of the largest celebrations of Latino culture and success in Connecticut.

In 2007, the LPRAC bestowed its Latino Citizen of the Year Award on Bishop Peter A. Rosazza for his leadership in the area of social justice. He has been a beacon for the advancement of immigrant rights in the state and has actively participated in rallies for the rights of non-citizens, and given testimony on the need for ID cards and the victimization of immigrants.

Leticia Colon, was awarded the Latina Citizen of the Year Award for her continued commitment and the monumental success she has achieved helping mentally challenged adults succeed through social integration.

The coveted Community Service Award was given to the Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters' Latino Mentoring Initiative, for their work to provide positive influences to children desperately in need of them. Through one-on-one mentoring, each child whose life is touched by having a big brother or a big sister is one step closer to a fulfilling and rewarding life, and the Latino Mentoring Initiative is one step closer to its goal of building stronger communities one child at a time.

Finally, as the only state commission awarding scholarships to Latino youth, the LPRAC once again recognized the work of six students with \$2,500 college scholarships. The students recognized were:

Grace DiRenzo - University of Connecticut
Isabel Gonzalez - New Britain High School
Yeritza Vega - Saint Leo University
Eric Martin Amado - Assumption College
Mark Anthony Montalvo - University of Connecticut
Hernan Pagan - University of Hartford



LPRAC Commissioners and staff with Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient Luis Tiant (center).



Promesa Youth Scholarship recipient Grace DiRenzo and LPRAC Commissioner Norma Rodriguez-Reyes.



Latina Citizen of the Year Award recipient Leticia Colon and 2007 LPRAC Chairman Manuel Garcia.

End of Session Report

Connecticut General Assembly 2008 Regular & Special Session

By Werner Oyanadel, Principal Legislative Analyst

This document provides a summary of legislation that the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) prioritized during the 2008 regular and special session of the Connecticut General Assembly in compliance with the Commission's legislative mandate. This document also contains copies of testimony and pertinent correspondence forwarded to the leaders of the Joint Committee on Legislative Management to be in compliance with Public Act 03-229, which mandates that the Commission work in consultation with the leaders of the Legislature on a short and long term plan of recommendations that aim at improving the socio-economic foundation of Latino families residing in the state.

Legislative Summary

The 2008 regular session convened on February 6th, 2008 and adjourned on May 7th, 2008 without any adjustments to the biennium budget adopted one year earlier. The main reason for the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) not to make any state adjustments to its 07-09 budgets was in large part due to an estimated budgetary deficit, which at the time reached almost 80 million. The same estimates a few months earlier projected an actual surplus of \$280 million. However, in September of that year the state certified a surplus of \$83.4 million. The LPRAC, which released its fourth and most comprehensive Latino Socio-Economic Study on March of 2008, called on the General Assembly to strengthen safety net programs in preparation to a projected economic downturn. It asked for state contracting reform to allow Latino entrepreneurs the ability to compete for state contracts not currently available in this market. Most importantly, perhaps, the LPRAC renew its recommendation that the state make a stronger effort to diversify the composition of state commissions and committees to allow Hispanic leaders to take part of the decision making process, which they are currently excluded from.

The Commission in specific urged lawmakers to pass legislation to close the ethnic and racial education achievement gap by fully funding universal pre-school education; raising child care subsidies up to costs; improve pedagogically appropriate secondary education reform; improve truancy reporting; and support multicultural education legislation in order to decrease the rampant high school drop out rates and low performing achievement scores by Latino students. The LPRAC also recommended the passage of a state earned income credit tax; reform the Connecticut business entity tax; and increase heating assistance to help alleviate the high energy costs affecting so many people across the state. We provided legislative advice to the State-wide Primary Care Access Authority, which is currently formulating the policy to fully implement a universal primary care infrastructure in Connecticut, and collaborated with the Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System, which is currently planning an agenda over the next years. The LPRAC also advised this Commission to prioritize the administration of justice in the judicial system by increasing the appointment of more Latino judges, improve legal representation for neglected Latino children and increase court interpreters within the judicial system.



L to R: 2008 LPRAC
Chairman Carlos Alvarez, CT
Attorney General
Richard Blumenthal and
LPRAC Commissioner Luis
Menéndez.

The first legislative battle that the Commission won during the legislature in 2008 was in response to the Governor's budget recommendation to eliminate the four million seven hundred thousand dollars put in place to implement the newly created statewide medical interpreter services program. Specially, since all the research on the subject, clearly indicates that language barriers continue to be among the most serious obstacles faced by individuals with Limited English Proficiency in need of critical health care in Connecticut.

Equally important to the commission during the 2008 session was the LPRAC's response to the home mortgage foreclosure crisis affecting families across the state. The LPRAC argued in support of stricter regulations against the sub-prime loan industry – an industry which cultivate a large portion of their business by targeting Latinos and African-Americans. While the LPRAC understands that sub-prime loans are still legal, we adamantly believe that the sub-prime industry and its many predatory practices continue to have a negative effect on the Latino home market. As a result of these concerns, the LPRAC testified in support of Senate Bill 423, "An Act Concerning Foreclosure Prevention and Responsible Lending", which would have increased restrictions in mortgage products, and ban abusive practices by mortgage lenders. While this bill did not make it out of the banks committee, many of the ideas the LPRAC favored, were included in sHB No. 5577, "An Act Concerning Responsible Lending and Economic Security," which also allows people facing foreclosure the ability to keep their homes and creates harder accountability measures for lenders. This legislation became Public Act 08-176.

The LPRAC was also successful advocating in favor of the establishment of a new health advisory council responsible for making recommendation on ways to decrease health disparities for racial and ethnic groups in Connecticut. Public Act 08-171 was signed by the Governor on June 12th, 2008 in the company of Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the LPRAC. This is an excellent step forward considering all the critical health issues affecting the Latino community in our state, such as high rates of diabetes, HIV/AIDS, asthma, teen pregnancy, and lead poisoning within a community which is largely uninsured.

The LPRAC continued advocating in support of the creation of the state version of the Earned Income Credit Tax (EITC). It is the Commission's beliefs that the creation of a 100% refundable state income credit program would benefit working families living below-poverty incomes achieve self sufficiency. The LPRAC for the record has been supportive of the adoption of the state version of the federally recognized Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for several years. The federal EITC has a strong bi-partisan record, which helped it get enacted into law under President Gerald Ford back in 1975. The federal EITC was called one of the "best anti-poverty" measures by Ex-President Ronald Reagan. (Raised Bill Number 163 "An Act Concerning a State Earned Income Tax Credit")

The Commission was successful in supporting the adoption of section § 60 of Public Act 08-184 regarding the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. This act amended a regulation within the State Department of Public Health, which denied vendors from participating or reapplying to the WIC program, based on minimum distance requirements between participating vendors, for failure to maintain a minimum inventory, and for other small administrative issues such as prohibiting a vendor the WIC license due to an uncompleted application. The new law will now provide vendors with 15 days to fix any deficiencies in their applications for initial or continued authorization. This amendment was necessary to correct an antiquated and discriminatory practice that was affecting small Latino market store owners in urban settings.

The Commission was also successful in its support for the enactment of the use of the federal food-stamp employment and training matching funds (PA 08-161), which requires the Department of Social Services to administer a food stamp employment and training that maximizes the use of the federal program's matching funds provision that offer qualifying employment and training activities to Latino/as receiving food stamps.

The Commission succeeded in our legislative efforts advocating for the expansion of the "Care 4 Kids Program". (Public Ac 08-100) This act directs the Department of Social Services to establish extended eligibility standards for people receiving child care subsidies under the Care 4 Kids Program who become ineligible for the subsidy due to a temporary interruption in employment or other approved activity.

During the August 2008 Special Session, the LPRAC was pleased that the CGA adopted and expanded the Energy Assistance and Home Heating Relief programs. The amounts appropriated during the Special Session totaled \$28 million dollars to provide emergency home heating assistance to families living below the federal poverty level and 51 million dollars for furnace repair and upgrades. In addition, during Fiscal Year 09, the CGA approved an additional \$114 million of Heating Energy Assistance to Low Income residents, Pubic Act 08-01, August Special session.

The LPRAC is also pleased that the minimum wage was increased during the 2008 Legislative Session. This Public Act No. 08-92 "An Act Concerning the Minimum Wage" (sHB No. 5105) was vetoed, but it was overridden by the legislature. The hourly minimum wage will be changed from \$7.65 to \$8.00 beginning January 1st, 2009 and to \$8.25 January 1st, 2010.

2008 Legislative Agenda

As part of its mission to positively affect the advancement of the state's Latino and Puerto Rican communities, the LPRAC has established a firm set of legislative priorities. It is the belief of the LPRAC that testifying and advocating for change in these areas will affect the lives of thousands of Latinos in communities throughout the state. In 2008 the LPRAC will focus its energy on:

Education

- Support the creation of universal pre-school education
- Support the Multicultural Education reform legislation
- Enhancement of a pedagogically appropriate secondary education curriculum
- Increase financial aid resources for post secondary education
- Improve truancy reporting & prevent changes to the "in-school" suspension law

Economic Development

- Support the passage of a State Earned Income Credit Tax
- Reform Connecticut's Business Entity Tax
- Increase financial assistance to counter act high energy costs

Health

- Support the passage of universal health care legislation
- Support funds for interpreters under Medicaid and linguistic access in emergency hospitals
- Protect and enhance funding for persons with HIV/AIDS
- Restore continuous eligibility for HUSKY recipients

Housing

- Strengthen state anti-predatory lending law & provide foreclosure assistance

Judicial Reform

- Improve legal representation of abused or neglected children
- Increase court interpreters in the judicial system
- Diversify the court system by appointing additional Latino judges

Immigration

- Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform at the federal level
- Support the in-state tuition bill

Participation, Speaking Engagements & Presentations



Below is a list of the activities and events in which the LPRAC took an active role in 2008.

Puerto Rican Flag Raising at the Capitol

Dominican Republic Flag Raising at the Capitol

Latino Voting Summit

Hispanic Merchants Association Annual Banquet

La Feria de La Familia

African American Affairs Commission Awards Ceremony

New Britain Puerto Rican Festival

Hispanic Health Council's Health Fair

New London Diversity Fair

CT Minority Public Service Scholars Planning Committee

LPRAC Tribute to Hispanic Veterans at the LOB

Presented at the Hispanic Latino Forum at Central Connecticut State University with Deputy Commissioner of Education George Coleman

Participated in the Puerto Rican Flag Raising Ceremony at Hartford City Hall

Peruvian Flag Raising at the Capitol

Brazilian Flag Raising at the Capitol

Latino Voting Summit Media Tour with Secretary of State Bysiewicz, to discuss Latino Voter Engagement and Civic Participation

United States Hispanic Leadership Institute Forum on Latino Voter Engagement

Presenters at the Connecticut Association of Affirmative Action Professionals Annual Conference

Maria Sanchez Elementary Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

Post University Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

Trafficking in Persons Council

Improving the Educational and Social Outcomes of Hispanic/Latino Students: A State Forum

Participation, Speaking Engagements & Presentations (cont.)

Participated in the CL&P Social Agency Forum

Participated as a presenter for the Department of Social Services Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

Latino Heritage Presentation at the Cheshire Correctional Institution

National Puerto Rican Coalition 2007 National Policy Conference

Governor's Task Force to look at CHRO and Affirmative Action and Diversity in the State

Broad Park Development Annual Gala

Connecticut's Health Care Future Symposium

Department of Children and Families Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

Hispanic/Latino and Black Men's Forum at Manchester High School

Presenter for Spanish Community of Wallingford Leadership Training

Statewide Primary Care Authority

New England Utilities Company Diversity Panelists

Participants in the Reflecting Connecticut Initiative

Participants in the Secretary of State's Press Conference Announcing the Results of the Biennial Report on the Gender and Racial Composition of Connecticut State Boards and Commissions

Panelists at the Central Connecticut State University Forum on Education

Held a Press Conference Announcing the Release of the LPRAC Socio-Economic Study

Latino Endowment Fund Spring Social

Latinos Left Behind Conference

Southside Institute Neighborhood Alliance 30th Anniversary Gala

Presenters at Trinity College Center for Urban & Global Studies on the Subject of Central and South American Immigration to Hartford

Presenters of How a Bill Becomes a Law at The Latino Collaborative

Presenters at University of Connecticut Latino Conference

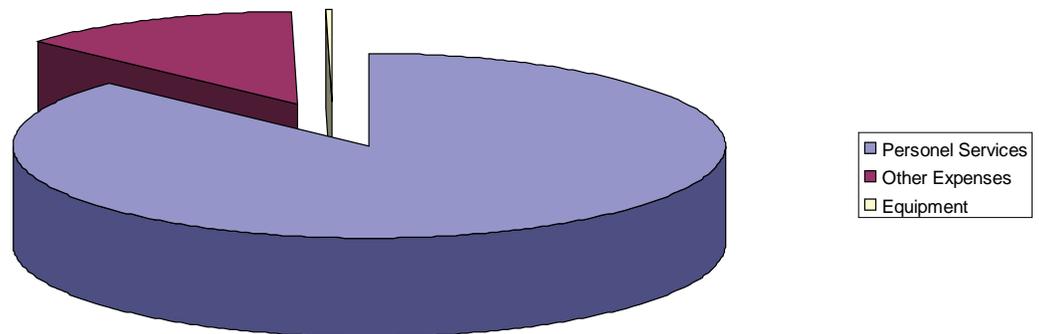
Presenters at *Know Your Rights* Training Seminar for Immigrants

Panelists at *Public Allies: Connecticut Executive Management*

2007-2008 Budget

Item	Appropriated
Personnel Services	\$361,896
Other Expenses	\$53,106
Equipment	\$1,217
Total	\$416,219

LPRAC Budget for Fiscal Year 2007 - 2008



* Other Expenses includes contracted services as well as staff development and printing costs.

LPRAC Information

Staff

Werner Oyanadel
Principal Legislative Analyst

Lina Lorenzi, Esq.
Legislative Analyst II

Lucy Goicoechea Hernandez
Special Projects Coordinator &
Grants Writer

Karlo X. Ruiz
Public Information Officer

Clarisa Cardone
Senior Legislative Secretary

Commission Committees

Executive

Article VIII of the By Laws
This committee meets monthly.

Procedures & Personnel

Article IX (d) of the By Laws
Meets as related issues arise.

Priorities & Legislation

Article IX (a) of the By Laws
Meets on a monthly basis.

Budget

Article IX (e) of the By Laws
This committee meets every month.

Public Information, Education & Talent Bank

Article IX (c) of the By Laws
Meets as related issues arise.

Special Projects

Article IX (f) of the By Laws
Meets on a monthly basis.

Important Information

Commission meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at the Legislative Office Building, Room 2600, Hartford, Connecticut

6:00 pm -- 8:30 pm

We are always looking to add to our talent bank. If you are interested in serving on a state board or commission, call 860.240.8330 or visit us on the Web at www.cga.ct.gov/lprac.



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