



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
Affairs Commission

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Commissioners:

Ramón L. Arroyo

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Hon. Migdalia Castro

Richard A. Cruz

Francisco O. Cuin

Dr. Sonia B. Manjon

Lourdes E. Montalvo

Juan M. Pérez

Norma Rodríguez-Reyes

Eugene M. Salorio

Danny Torres

Acting Executive Director

Werner Oyanadel

**Special Projects Director/
Grants Writer**

Lucía Goicoechea-Hernández

Senior Legislative Secretary

Clarisa Cardone

MINUTES
LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting
May 18, 2011
Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut
5:35 pm

Commissioners Present:	Ramón L. Arroyo, Isaías T. Díaz, Esq., Yolanda Castillo, Richard A. Cruz, Francisco Cuin, Dr. Sonia B. Manjon, Enrique Marcano, Sr., Lourdes E. Montalvo, Juan M. Pérez, Ed Rodríguez, Danny Torres and Maritza Tirú
Commissioners on phone:	Carlos Candal, Esq. and Norma Rodríguez Reyes
Commissioners Absent:	Honorable Migdalia Castro and Eugene Salorio
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Acting Executive Director and Clarisa Cardone, Sr. Legislative Secretary

Tape 1A

Chairman Díaz, Esq. asked Mrs. Cardone to do roll call as Commissioner Maritza Tirú, Secretary of the Board was not present at the time. Quorum was established.

Commissioner Tirú came in at 5:48 p.m.

Public Participation:

- 1) Ken Mysogland, Director of Foster Care and Adoptions for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Felix Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner of DCF asked to create a new partnership with LPRAC and work together organizing public information forums in the Latino community to help increase foster parents across Connecticut.

Commissioner Marcano, Sr. commented that he worked in DCF as a social worker and as an investigator and with his experience on the field he thinks that the perception in our Latino families is that when the DCF go to their homes you are the police. He stated that the DCF is visiting Latino families more often than other racial and ethnic groups and therefore, he recommended that DCF must investigate everyone as a whole to avoid discriminating against the Latino population in Connecticut.

Commissioner Arroyo asked the speakers that the DCF should avoid removing a child from a Latino family. He recommended that the DCF check with the family (i.e. grandparents, sisters, brothers or cousins, etc.) for placements.

Commissioner Cruz asked the speakers from DCF if they partner with other organizations throughout the state.

Mr. Mysogland said that they are working with several other partners and many new ones have been initiated since Commissioner Katz took over in January. You are the second major group that we have come to visit for help. Furthermore, he stated, in response to Commissioner Arroyo's question that it is a mandate of theirs to investigate relatives prior to putting that child with a non-relative. We need your help to assist DCF to increase the pool of Latino families to come forward so we can pursue the possibility to have them become foster parents. We need your help to spread the word that DCF has changed and it is easier to work with the families.

- 2) Jen Alexander, Director of Research and Policy at Conncan (the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now) and Jessica Bloom, Communications & Mobilization Manager at Conncan spoke to the LPRAC about legislation that may potentially help in their opinion the best teachers around if budget cuts demand school teacher layoffs in the near future. The policy that they recommend to the Connecticut General Assembly would amend the normally used system of "last one in, first one out".

Tape 1 B

They are asking the following:

- A. Lay off teachers who are subject to intensive supervision for poor performance before they lay off teachers whose performance is deemed effective.
- B. Retain teachers who have specialized training for a particular school.

Commissioner Dr. Manjon said to be in support of the recommendations offered to LPRAC by our Conncan presenters. She indicated that at the local level because of the local politics that exists – it's a stalemate, which prevents change. She agrees that this needs to be prioritized by LPRAC.

Ms. Alexander asked for LPRAC to work with them to get the word out about this concern. We are non-profit and non-partisan. Governor Molloy said that he will keep education funding flat which will potentially result in teacher layoffs. Therefore, we advocates have to figure out a way to advocate for a better system to distribute the dollars in a better way to avoid layoffs in the short run.

Commissioner Cruz commented that the issue of closing the achievement gap was discussed this past December at our Legislative Roundtable on the Education Gap and a lot of these issues were discussed then. The LPRAC will have a follow up forum on this topic in December and you are more than welcome to join us. We will have Latino Legislators and the higher ups in the educational system ladder as well. You can provide us written testimony as well.

3) The last guest was Jackie Matos of Waterbury who spoke of a problem in the school system he daughter is facing in Waterbury. She stated that her daughter was doing great in the Catholic School system but because of financial hardship she had to transfer her to the Waterbury public schools and she is now in 7th grade. She is failing academically and in the beginning of the year she spoke to the teacher about it and "they" blame her daughter for failing. I had asked the principal to transfer her to another group and when she went to the other set of teachers she was doing better. However, she began to receive reprimands from her teachers for anything that happened. In November she met with the school principal, assistant principal, teachers, and guidance counselors and they referred her daughter to an early intervention plan because they thought her daughter was a Special Education child. On February 10th in the afterschool program while her daughter was waiting for the bus, the custodian who is white, allegedly swept her daughter's feet, pushed her, and cursed at her. Meanwhile the principal's office called the DCF and said that there was an altercation. Then on Monday, Feb. 14, Ms. Matos went to the school to request that the custodian be arrested but the school denied her request and she called the DCF. She called OCR (Office of Civil Rights) and they suggested that she talk to the Board of Education. The OCR wants to see the ratio of Hispanic children in the afterschool program and they wanted to see the suspension rate and also the rates for the Hispanic students in relationship to the Anglo-Saxon peers. Mrs. Matos said that 45% is students in Waterbury school system are Hispanic. She went to the Board of Education and nothing was done because Sharon DeBianco is related to the President of the Board of Education. She then called OCR and they asked her to write a letter to them explaining everything that transpired. After that, my daughter keeps getting suspended for anything she does and right now she is on a two day suspension. That is why she is asking LPRAC for help.

Commissioner Pérez said that he has worked with exactly the same issues in the Windham School. He asked if in the Waterbury school system there is a "Zero Tolerance" Policy. Commissioner Perez told Mrs. Matos that he is going to give her the contact information of an attorney who may help her "pro bono" on this topic that has helped other parents in Windham with similar complaints.

Commissioner Montalvo said that it is important to have a paper trail on these cases and recommend her to keep a file available at all times.

Ms. Matos also said that at the Board of Education called her a liar.

Commissioner Tirú said that she personally worked closely with Ms. Matos in the greater Waterbury area. After she explained to her the incident, she advised her to report it to the police. We know that the former police superintendent is now in the Board of Education and controls what the police will do in the school system. She asked Mrs. Matos to come to LPRAC to express her concerns because there is retaliation on a daily basis against her daughter. Perhaps we can write a letter that she is seeking help outside of Waterbury.

Chairman Díaz, Esq. said that discrimination is actually one of our mandates under Results Based Accountability (RBA).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of April 20, 2011 by Commissioner Torres and seconded by Commissioner Arroyo. Motion approved as follows:

10 Yeas: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal Esq., Cruz, Cuin, Marcano, Sr., Dr. Manjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes, Torres and Tirú

3 Abstentions: Commissioners Castillo, Montalvo and Pérez

2 Absent: Commissioners Hon. Commissioner Castro and Salorio

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Díaz, Esq. updated the LPRAC on the following items:

1. Thank the commissioners for standing by the decision-making and the wisdom of their leadership in their requested budget proposal before the Appropriations Committee. The LPRAC received its requested budget with an increase for the next biennium, which are the product and the fruit of the hard work that we do here.
2. We received an award from the Hartford Multinational Lions Club and he, and Commissioners Arroyo, Marciano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Cruz, Ms. Cardone and our Acting Executive Director Werner Oyanadel were present at the award ceremony. Also, Hartford's current Mayor was there, Representative Minnie González and the Mayor of Bloomfield were also present. It was a wonderful feeling that the hard work that we are doing for the Latino community is beginning to get recognized.

Mr. Oyanadel spoke about Commissioner Montalvo's award she received last month. He then said that he was given an official citation by the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus for his efforts to improve the quality of life for Connecticut's Latino community.

3. **Chairman Díaz, Esq.** mentioned that he, Ms. Goicoechea Hernández and Acting Executive Director Oyanadel had a conference call with Mass Mutual hoping to get some funding for our scholarship program.
4. Honorable Commissioner Castro and Acting Executive Director Oyanadel visited members of the House of Representatives on Tues., May 3rd regarding the in-state tuition bill.

Motion made to approve the Chairperson's report by Commissioner Rodríguez and seconded by Commissioner Montalvo.

Discussion:

Commissioner Montalvo thanked everyone for their best wishes for the award she received at Eastern and that she is very happy to be in the LPRAC. We are doing a good job throughout the state and we are getting more and more recognition throughout the state.

Commissioner Pérez congratulated Acting Executive Director Oyanadel for the job and the staff at LPRAC that with 3 people doing so much work and that the whole commission feels that way and we should all be proud that we are being recognized and we've been the talk at the hallway at OLM for the work we are doing.

Commissioner Marciano, Sr. said that Monday afternoon both he and Commissioner Pérez said that they went to the Governor's office and we just walked in. He doesn't think this could happen at any other time.

Approved unanimously.

ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Oyanadel said that he prepared his written Acting Executive Director's report to the Chairman's report which is read in parts by the LPRAC Chairman during his report so there is no need to high the same items again twice. He then introduced our staff new summer intern Julievette Santiago from the University of Connecticut. She has already begun to do the work for us.

Chairman Díaz, Esq. announced that she is from Waterbury, CT.

PUBLIC INFORMATION/TALENT BANK COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Cruz, Chairman of this committee said that a couple of weeks ago Chairman Díaz, Esq., Americo Santiago and he met with Mr. Oyanadel and met with Dr. Charles Venator Santiago who is one of our speakers and panelist for our event next week for a crash course in the training on the software available for redistricting. He then invited the members of the board to attend the redistricting summit scheduled for May 25th. . Right now it looks like 40 people will be attending but we hope to reach to 100 people.

Commissioner Castillo said that presently, the state already has a redistricting committee with legislators developing these lines. How are we playing a role in that process? She believes that there are no Latinos on that committee and there supposed to be a subcommittee part of it that develops maps of Latinos and Blacks in the state. How do we play a role on that? We should be sitting on that committee too.

Tape 2 A

Commissioner Cruz said that the LPRAC staff and LPRAC board members were in attendance at the second Redistricting Commission meeting at the LOB on Monday afternoon.

Commissioner Castillo said that she was involved in the redistricting process 10 years earlier; she recommended that LPRAC be part of drawing the lines. We should join Americo on this.

Commissioner Rodríguez Reyes said that when she received the email about the LPRAC redistricting forum invitation, there were no females on the panel. She also suggested that LPRAC send a letter to the Reapportionment Commission to tell them that we are displeased that no Latina women are on the panel.

Commissioner Castillo said she has experience on redistricting and she feels that other Latina women on our commission should have been asked to be a panelist in the LPRAC Redistricting Summit.

Commissioner Montalvo said that she was asked to be on the panel before she started her new job and she wanted to be on it but with the new job, she couldn't.

Commissioner Cruz said that the next Public Information Committee meeting will be on June 14th at 4:30 pm at the LOB before our commission meeting.

Mr. Oyanadel said that the Public Information Committee invited Alma Maya and since Commissioner Castillo was in a car accident the committee decided not to ask her to be part of it. Moreover, he asked members of the Public Information Committee if it would be OK to invite a female State Representative from Windham to the panel who was referred by Commissioner Montalvo but in communications with the co-chairs of the committee, they felt that it might not be good idea to invite elected officials to the panel for many reasons. We also invited Yanil Teron, but she declined to be in the panel and at the end of the day we ended up with no women on the panel. In regards to the membership to the bipartisan Reapportionment Committee; it is made up of eight legislators according to the state constitution. We don't know why the Legislative leadership did not appoint any female Latino or any African-American legislators to the Reapportionment Committee – that is a question that we need to ask the Reapportionment Committee.

Chairman Díaz, Esq. said that Commissioner Rodríguez-Reyes also spoke to him on this issue personally.

Commissioner Cruz encourages all who can attend to please do so and said that the next meeting will be on June 14th at 4:30 pm in the LOB before our commission meeting. We would like to discuss improvements on our website too.

Motion made to approve the Public Information/Talent Bank Committee report by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez. Approved unanimously.

PRIORITIES AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Candal, Esq., Chairperson for the Priorities and Legislation Committee said that thanks to Mr. Oyanadel's help and our Commission's spearheading movement, the CT Dream Act is very close to be passed. It passed in the House of Representatives and we're waiting for the debate in the State Senate. In addition, Mr. Oyanadel had some contact with Mike Lawlor who is working with Governor Molloy regarding the racial profiling bill. As mentioned in last meeting, one of our next items will be trying to investigate the benefits of licenses for immigrants. Mr. Oyanadel has had some preliminary discussions with individuals from agencies. The expectation is to begin this research after the legislature finishes, probably in the first week of June.

Motion to approve the Priorities and Legislation Committee Report by Commissioners Castillo, Rodríguez Reyes and Rodríguez and seconded by Commissioner Pérez. Approved unanimously.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Pérez said that three female LPRAC Commissioners are going to review the 35 scholarship applications received. 9 will be for college and the rest for seniors. The reviewers will be: Tirú, Montalvo and Castillo. The other nominations will be reviewed by the Special Projects Committee. He wants the commission to vote on the Lifetime Achievement Award. Furthermore, he reminded all Board members to attend the LPRAC's Tribute to Hispanic Veterans event. Finally, he stated that the committee finalized the contract for Amarante and it received approval from OLM for October 22, 2011. On the Golf Tournament, the LPRAC staff received new sponsors and Commissioner Marciano, Sr. Chairs this Ad Hoc Committee with Commissioner Cruz.

Commissioner Marciano, Sr. said that they attended a breakfast with Northeast Utilities/Yankee Gas and the president of the company was there and said his emphasis is education and he made a comment on the golf tournament for the scholarship and he said he will sponsor our Golf Tournament. The information is with him and Ana Alfaro and Marilyn Alverio. We will also ask for more money for the scholarship celebration.

Motion made to approve the Special Projects Committee Report made by Commissioner Cruz and seconded by Commissioner Montalvo.

Discussion:

Mr. Oyanadel said that he received a call from OLM and that once we receive responses from the RFP's for the golf tournament, they need the Special Project Committee to form an AD HOC Committee to revise the proposals we receive for this event.

Motion approved unanimously.

RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Castillo, Co-Chair apologized that both Commissioner Salorio and herself have not been able to meet. They should be meeting soon.

Mr. Oyanadel reported that Commissioner Salorio has been very busy but he has met with Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández and with Marcus Rivera who are already seeing if they can do the Turn the Curve training on Education and a new RBA Turn the Curve on Health with the assistance of Commissioner Lourdes Montalvo.

Commissioner Castillo hopes to talk to Ana-Maria to train everyone on Results Based Accountability theory.

Mr. Oyanadel said that Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández is trying to get the agency retreat to be in August and Ana-Maria will be one of our trainers there on RBA theory.

Motion made to approve the RBA Committee Report made by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Montalvo. Approved unanimously.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Motion made that LPRAC authorize the Acting Executive Director and the Chairman to send a letter to the Leadership and the House and the Senate in reference to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee on the reapportioning redistricting by Commissioner Pérez and seconded by Commissioners Marcano, Sr. and Cruz. Approved unanimously.

Motion made that the LPRAC move forward and work with the representatives of DCF in looking for a later date this year for a public forum or summit in which we can address the issues of fostering and mentoring and other aspects involving kids made by Commissioner Cruz and seconded by Commissioners Castillo and Montalvo. Approved unanimously.

Motion made to authorize Commissioner Candal, Esq. to explore forming a relationship with Conncan so that we can work on the achievement gap by Commissioner Rodríguez and seconded by Commissioner Marcano, Sr.

Discussion:

Commissioner Rodríguez volunteered to be on this committee.

Commissioner Manjon also volunteered.

Commissioner Montalvo said that she would like to see that when they start drafting the pieces of legislation, we should also be at the table with them. We need to ensure that whatever legislation goes through that it is not legislation that is going to come back and haunt us later on or that at the end of the day it gets watered on.

Commissioner Rodríguez said that personally, he intends to send a letter asking why there are no Latinos on the board.

Approved unanimously.

Motion made to authorize the Acting Executive Director and the Chairman to formulate a message so that we can be uniform in our message when we partake in the public forums regarding redistricting made by Commissioner Marcano, Sr. and seconded by Commissioner Cruz. Approved unanimously.

Tape 2 B

Motion made to authorize the Acting Executive Director and the Chairman to write a letter to the Board of Education of Waterbury, CT to indicate to them that we have heard a major concern and that we are going to be looking into it with the same enthusiasm with which they have disclosed to her and a friendly amendment to also copy the superintendent of schools, principals and teachers involved in this process telling them that we are looking at them enthusiastically as they have been looking at her made by Commissioner Rodríguez and seconded by Commissioner Pérez.

Mr. Oyanadel asked if he is allowed to go and be there when these discussions take place.

Commissioner Marcano, Sr. said he might not be able to get in because the child is a minor.

Commissioner Manjon said parents have the write to invite who they want to be there.

Commissioner Montalvo said that she has to sign a release. Also, the following Monday, the Board of Education will be meeting and we are going to track things down on this.

Chairman Díaz, Esq. said that he would want to be there and he has a friend was recently appointed to fill a slot.

Commissioner Arroyo said that you should include Mayor Jarjura and that in Waterbury the Latino Legislator there.

Commissioner Castillo said that we should read the letter that we are going to write in front of the Board of Education.

Approved unanimously.

Motion made to adjourn at 8:14 p.m. by Commissioner Marcano, Sr. and seconded by Commissioner Pérez. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Maritza Tirú
Secretary
LPRAC Board

MT:cjc