



**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 31, 2013
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 12
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Jesusa Rivera, House Lay Member, South Bend (TELEPHONE)
Pedro Ledo, Jr., Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (TELEPHONE)
Charlie Garcia, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)
Rep. Rebecca Kubacki
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Andrea Perez, Designee, Department of Health
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Gerardo Gonzalez, House Lay Member, Bloomington
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission
Lenee Reedus, Designee, Dept of Education (TELEPHONE)

Commissioners Not Present:

Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Diego Morales, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Senator Frank Mrvan
Senator Greg Walker

Visitors:

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

Chairman Christian Gallo called the meeting to order with quorum established. Gallo apologized for his absences over the last several months, noting that he has been dealing with personal business outside of the country.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Herb Hernandez moved that the minutes for the meetings of October and September 2012 be approved, and they unanimously were.

Approval of Financials

Executive Director Danny Lopez said that the commission is on-schedule to conservatively finish the year just under budget. He noted that two remaining obligations were pending, one tied to Latino Page Day at the Statehouse and the other to hosting some type of statewide information session. The financials were approved unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Gallo asked that commissioners keep themselves informed about federal deferred action with respect to undocumented individuals in order to ensure that people in their areas have access to the right information. He said that in Lafayette, as an example, some had expressed uncertainty or concern because of the length of time it has taken to get notification of approval or denial. Commissioner Rebecca Kubacki asked if people locally were getting educated on the details. Gallo said that the process was fairly simple and many people were able to apply on their own, but he said that nonetheless people have been concerned about the length of the process.

Commissioner Jesusa Rivera said that in South Bend many families were told that their fingerprints had been lost and that the fingerprint process in general was causing a backlog. Rivera also said that in her area, at least one DACA workshop per month was going to be held.

Commissioner Richard Espinosa said that someone in his area had said that DNA samples would be taken in place of fingerprints. That report had not been substantiated and no one had heard of any examples of that. Lopez said that commissioners should not answer questions to which they don't have answers but rather to direct questioners to the website.

Finally, Gallo said that some states were considering providing drivers licenses to undocumented individuals, and he was concerned that people would be taking advantage to try to sell licenses to undocumented individuals in Indiana.

Executive Director's Report

Lopez said that the commission had been working mainly on the focus groups in partnership with the Indiana University Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, and he provided a synopsis of the sessions, the communities worked in, and the topics discussed. One point that had

come out of the discussions, Lopez stated, was the importance of local mass transit and the impact that reduced options for mass transit had on low-income Latino families.

Another point of emphasis coming out of the focus group was the perceived lack of extracurricular opportunities available for students, as well as the shift in academic calendars in some districts to a year-long schedule.

Lopez said that the report, to be turned over to commissioners in March, would need to be digested and a series of recommendations pulled out for policymakers and the legislature. He asked if the commission would want to digest the report initially as a whole or in a smaller working group. Rivera suggested that a small group consisting of commissioners in whose cities sessions were hosted start by looking at the report as a whole. Commissioner Charlie Garcia said that, given that this report and the feedback garnered would be the backbone for future initiatives and recommendations, the commission should meet in a strategy session to digest the information as a whole.

Lopez said that the commission would also need to establish how best to convey the information gathered to the rest of the state. Garcia said that having a statewide information session utilizing the technologies to connect participants all across the state would be a valuable approach. Commissioner Gerardo Gonzalez said that allowing the report to be presented by those who worked on it to the whole commission would then facilitate a discussion about what appropriate next steps for dissemination might be.

Commissioner Teresa Velez noted that she observed in the sessions she attended that residents don't have a full understanding correct information about healthcare coverage for all people living in Indiana. She said that an opportunity exists for education and outreach related to this topic. Gallo said that one challenge is that undocumented individuals don't seek information because they fear being arrested.

New Business

Gallo said that elections needed to be held for the commission's executive committee. These elections are held at the first meeting of each calendar year. Commissioner Herb Hernandez provided statutory background information on the election process and specific questions that had been posed by the commission to the Attorney General's office about the process over the years.

Hernandez then nominated Commissioner Pedro Ledo for chairman, and Kubacki seconded. The commission approved unanimously.

Kubacki nominated Gallo to serve as vice-chairman, and Gonzalez seconded. Espinosa had nominated Gonzalez, but Gonzalez declined. Gallo accepted the nomination, and the commission approved unanimously.

Gallo said that the commission should consider having a Treasurer, though not a secretary. Kubacki nominated Hernandez for the position of Treasurer. Garcia said that he would suggest

the nomination of a woman. Commissioner Mara Candelaria-Reardon agreed and nominated Commissioner Virginia Hernandez. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

In other new business, Candelaria-Reardon told commissioners about Latino Page Day at the Statehouse on March 11, an initiative run by her staff and one upon which the commission has partnered in the past. This year again, she pointed out, the commission would be partnering. Kubacki asked about involvement from the Governor's office, and Candelaria-Reardon said that an invite would be issued. She also said that new schools in various parts of the state were being contacted to send students, and that the response had been positive so far. Details about the event would be provided at the March meeting.

Adjournment

At 4:27pm, the meeting was adjourned.