



STATE OF INDIANA

**INDIANA COMMISSION ON
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS**
Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor

ICHLA

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 27, 2011
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 18
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend
Pedro Ledo, Senate Lay Member, Ft. Wayne
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)
Charlie Garcia, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Indiana Civil Rights Commission
Jesusa Rivera, House Lay Member, South Bend
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Joseph Cortes-Gurule, Designee, Dept of Education
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Sylvia Aguirre, House Lay Member, Warsaw

Commissioners Not Present:

Rep. Rebecca Kubacki
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)
Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Senator Frank Mrvan
Senator Greg Walker

Visitors:

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

Chairman Christian Gallo's called the meeting to order at 3:12p.m. No quorum was present at the time of the meeting's commencement.

Gallo began by asking commissioners present for volunteers to chair the four subcommittees. Executive Director Danny Lopez said that Commissioner Freddie Thon had nominated Commissioner Jesusa Rivera for the Education subcommittee and noted that Rivera herself had volunteered for the position. Lopez then noted that Gallo had wanted to remain as Civil Rights chair. Thon clarified that he had nominated Rivera for Civil Rights, not Education, and that for Education he had nominated Commissioner Joseph Cortes-Gurules. Commissioner Charlie Garcia said that Commissioner Herb Hernandez had volunteered to chair the Business subcommittee. Lopez added Rivera, Hernandez, and Gallo to their respective subcommittee positions for the record.

Lopez suggested that the subcommittees be chaired by lay appointed commissioners. State designees often have conflicts during meeting times, and elected officials often have conflicts during session.

No Health subcommittee chair had been named. Commissioners suggested that Morella Dominguez or Waldo Mikels-Carrasco be considered. After agreeing on Dominguez, Lopez said he would on behalf of the commissioner petition her for the position.

Lopez then said that the commission must establish topics for study by each of the subcommittees. Commissioner Mara Reardon said that many Latino-owned businesses in Indiana are struggling with access to capital issues. Additionally, she said that it would be important to help increase the number of Latino-owned businesses registered as M/WBEs. Lopez asked if commissioners had been approached about prime-sub-contractor issues, as well, and commissioners said that while this is sometimes a problem it is not specifically a problem for Latinos.

Commissioner Charlie Garcia said that he would like to see the State set a goal for the amount of public funds spent on Latino-owned businesses.

Thon suggested that existing partnerships and projects should be placed under specific subcommittees. Lopez agreed. He also noted, as Reardon had said at previous meetings, that ICHLA is not a granting agency and all partnerships would have to include active agency partnerships.

Reardon said that the growing technology gap and access to broadband is another issue which touches upon education and business. She noted that Latinos are the largest group of users of technology and have the slowest adoption rates at home. She said that access to technology is critical for those seeking jobs or staying involved with their children in schools. Lopez asked if statewide statistics exist in this area, and Reardon said she would find out for the group. Either way, the Education subcommittee would be tasked to examine the barriers to adoption.

Garcia said that the Hispanic Business Council surveyed Latino businesses and found that technology issues were major for most small businesses, and those businesses were seeking donations and options for adopting technology. Thon and Reardon both said that businesses need to be educated on basic business technology fundamentals.

Lopez asked if school readiness and parent engagement should be part of the Education subcommittee's discussions. Reardon suggested that looking at statistics for early childhood program participation would definitely be attainable and worthwhile as a tool for providing statistic-based recommendations to the legislature in the coming months.

Gallo said that one obstacle to participation in early childhood programs is transportation, noting that one officer in his area tracks Latinos to try to issue them tickets. Many Latinos fear travelling. Commissioner Teresa Velez said that in families where only one parent works, early childhood programs are often not taken advantage of. Moreover, Commissioner Pedro Ledo said that proximity to a quality program was also a barrier, and Gallo offered that cultural factors also play a role.

Lopez suggested that early childhood education must become a community-centric initiative. Local stakeholders, such as local governments, non-profits, and universities, must collaborate to provide these services. He also noted that one of the things most often heard with respect to programming at universities is the idea that Latinos won't travel to campus, something that must be overcome.

Gallo said that he had been talking to officers about the need for more officer training on kidnapping issues. He would be interested in exploring training options. Reardon said that the commission should establish this as a problem in order to recommend greater training education opportunities. Gallo says he sees this on an ongoing basis, and that officers often see these issues as civil ones in which they don't have jurisdiction.

Rivera suggested that another civil rights issue is that local law enforcement is not recognizing Mexican licenses for people here legally less than 30 days. One of the considerations for the Civil Rights subcommittee would be to provide all local law enforcement agencies with copies of Mexican state licenses so that those legally with a valid visa stopped with that license will not be held.

Commissioner Joseph Cortes-Gurules joined the meeting, establishing quorum.

Commissioners reviewed the draft 2011-2012 Strategic Plan for approval consideration. Lopez walked through each and entertained questions from commissioners. He noted that all of the partnerships were active ones for the commission, and Thon said that a number of the issues were brought up during the Strategy Summit in 2010.

In talking about Latino student day at the Statehouse, Reardon said that the program is currently statewide. The biggest obstacle, she said, was costs associated with travel and bussing of the students. She said participation has been relatively strong in different regions, but more funding from ICHLA would help offset bus costs.

Reardon also said that programs of this nature are important because all too often internship opportunities are not taken advantage of by Latino students. She said paid internships are available through the General Assembly. Lopez said that while this year's deadline has probably passed, the commission should start advertising these positions for next session.

Lopez once again asked commissioners to recommend and recruit participants across the state for subcommittee participation.

Thon moved that the Strategic Plan be approved as amended, Reardon seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

All outstanding minutes pending approval were approved unanimously.

Approval of Financials

All outstanding minutes pending approval were approved unanimously.

Adjournment

At 4:31pm, the meeting was adjourned by Gallo.