



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS**  
*COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS*

ABERDEEN  
Public Meeting  
July 16, 2005

**Roll Call:**

Commissioners present: Diana Avalos, Ruben Baca, Faviola Contreras, Leo Gaeta, Ivonne Lopez-Morton, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Gabriel Portugal, Homero Tamez, Graciela Villanueva-Lopez, and Rebecca Villareal

Commissioners absent: Rosa Cabrera

Staff present: Uriel Iñiguez & Alicia Luna

Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM

**Approval of Minutes:**

Commissioner Ruben Baca made a motion to approve the minutes from the Wenatchee public meeting. Commissioner Portugal seconded the motion. **Minutes approved unanimously.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:**

**Economic Development – Commissioner Villareal (Chair):**

- February Small Business conference was a success. It was presented both in English and in Spanish.
- Small Business conferences are also planned for Mt. Vernon and Yakima this Fall and Winter.
- The plan is to have three conferences next year. Locations are yet to be determined, however, they will be in Eastern, Southern, and Central Washington.

**Education Committee – Commissioner Avalos (Chair)**

- Working on a letter that will be sent to all Washington State superintendents and to the OSPI regarding racial discrimination complaints received in seven school districts.
- Working on the drop out rate issue and issues prompted by WASL

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### **Executive Director Report – Uriel Iñiguez**

Executive Director, Uriel Iñiguez informed the public that the CHA office had moved to the Capitol Campus. The toll free number was not changed, however, the office and fax numbers were. Office number is 360-725-5661 and fax number is 360-586-9501. We also have a new website which is still under construction. All in attendance were asked to view the website and provide us with their input.

He also informed the public that the Annual Report would be out within a month and posted on the website. Last years Annual Report can be viewed on the CHA website and hardcopies were made available at the public meeting.

Final comments from the Executive Director were that he would be traveling throughout the State of Washington to obtain input from the communities on which direction they would like the Commission on Hispanic Affairs to take. He committed to making himself available to all communities and encouraged all to call him.

Vice Chair Yvonne Lopez-Morton, Ad Hoc Committee gave a short update on commissioner's terms, appointments, etc. There are a total of 11 commissioners which are appointed by the Governor and who serve on a volunteer basis. Rosa Cabrera is the newest appointee. Three of the Commissioner's first term is up next month, however, they have the option of serving a second term if appointed by the Governor. The Chair's term is up July 30, 2005 and he will be leaving the commission after serving two consecutive terms as Commissioner and one as Chair. Commissioner Lopez-Morton also informed the public that there are many boards and commissions in which they should consider joining.

Commissioner Gabriel Portugal advised the public of the possibility of a Latino Legislative Day. Community organizations will be asked to take the lead on this endeavor. A September (next meeting date) deadline has been set to determine if we will proceed and organize this effort.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Chair Gaeta stated that there is a need to address diversity in school districts. Do we start at a community level, proceed to commission level, and then state level? It was opened for discussion. The concern of whether we need to address cultural competency surfaced and the recommendation was to involve the Superintendents to develop a baseline for all schools to follow. Commissioner Baca made a motion to compile a report that supports the commissions concerns, draft a letter, and meet with OSPI. Commissioner Portugal seconded the motion and all voted to proceed with the motion.

**Action Item:** Commissioner Avalos and Commissioner Contreras will draft the letter and the Executive Director will take the lead on compiling the report and setting up the meeting with OSPI before the end of August 2005.

Chair Gaeta asked for input on format of future meetings to better serve the community. Six meetings are required per year. One option is to have four quarterly public meetings and two conference call meetings. Commissioner Portugal made a motion to have 4 quarterly meetings and 2 conference call meetings per year. Commissioner Contreras

seconded the motion. Further discussion on the structure of the meetings occurred. It was decided that the Executive Director would draft his recommendations and that further in depth discussion was needed before voting again. The Executive Director stated that it would be a hindrance if we waited to vote on this motion on a later date. A vote was taken resulting in four “yays” and six “nays”. Commissioner Baca made a motion recommending that the Executive Director develop/create a yearly plan and send out to the commissioners within two weeks. Commissioner Villareal seconded the motion.

**Action Item:** Executive Director will develop/create a yearly plan and send to the commissioners within two weeks.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Gaeta informed the public that the three Commission’s (CAPP, CHA, and CAAF) are collaborating and taking the lead on an upcoming September Diversity Summit. They are looking at coalitions such as DSHS, L&I and Human Links to provide the necessary grants for this summit. Further information will be posted on the website in the near future. Flyers will be sent to organizations and shared with bilingual radio stations and other media. Commissioners will also be given flyers to disseminate in the communities that they serve.

Chair Gaeta also informed the public that the Farm Housing Committee has been activated and that the Executive Director has been asked to be part of the committee. The first meeting is scheduled some time in August 2005. Jenaro Castañeda from OMWBE informed the commission that Mt. Vernon’s housing was “ugly” and that he wanted to volunteer to be part of the committee.

The Executive Director informed the Commissioner’s that he has been invited by the Mexican Consulate, Jorge Madrazo to attend a conference in Mexico City, Mexico. This is a yearly event where leaders from throughout the nation meet to dialogue on best practices. The Governor has yet to approve of the Executive Director’s participation.

Chair Gaeta asked the Commission to consider allowing the Executive Director to be involved in the rewriting of the Equity Bill (addresses disparities in Education) which did not pass the Senate during this past legislative session. OSPI will also be involved in the rewrite. Commissioner Baca made a motion to allow the Executive Director to participate in the rewrite of the Equity Bill. Commissioner Villareal seconded the motion. Vote resulted in all “yays”.

Chair Gaeta stated that by the fourth meeting the Commission has to appoint new officers. This being the fourth meeting Yvonne Lopez-Morton was appointed Chair and Gabriel Portugal was appointed Vice-Chair. Congratulations to both.

Commissioner Portugal acknowledged the outstanding work Commissioner Gaeta did as Chair.

### **GUEST SPEAKERS**

#### **Marc Brenman, Executive Director - Washington State Human Rights Commission**

Mr. Brenman explained to the public that the mission of his Commission is to eliminate and prevent discrimination through the fair application of the law, the efficient use of resources, and the establishment of partnerships with the community. There are four offices and five Commissioners in the State of Washington. Their process doesn't require an attorney and it is free. Training is offered to the community via meetings, radio, media, and website. Public forums are done on a monthly basis in different areas of the state. Complaints forms are both in English and Spanish. Hate incidences are on the rise and the greatest complaint that they receive is in education equity issues. Mr. Brenman invited the public to feel free to call on him on issues they might have. He can be reached on 360-753-2558 or via the toll free number 1-800-233-3247. The website is [www.hum.wa.gov](http://www.hum.wa.gov).

Commissioner Lopez-Morton thanked Mr. Brenman for the Human Rights Commission's accessibility in the Spokane area.

#### **Kim Tanaka, Boards and Commissions Coordinator – Office of the Governor**

Ms. Tanaka acknowledged the Commission on their work, congratulated the newly elected Chair and Vice-Chair and the outgoing Chair. She informed the public of her role as Board and Commissions Coordinator and advised them of the many opportunities to serve on a Board or Commission. A Board and Commissions Open Positions book was made available to the public.

#### **Veronica Bronkema, Relaciones Publicas-Gerente de Comunicación en Español and Jose Rodríguez, Insurance Services-Consulation Manager -Labor & Industries**

Ms. Bronkema informed the public of her role and function with L&I. She also informed them that L&I is working hard to ensure that the needs of the Hispanic community are heard and addressed. They provide translation of documents for L&I job related accidents, brochures and publications in Spanish and have developed a Spanish media campaign for radio and newspapers. They have 87 bilingual staff members throughout the state and they provide interpreters for appointments if needed.

Jose Rodriguez informed the public of the Early Return to Work Prevention program for injured workers. Through this program L&I can manage claims more efficiently and in a shorter time frame. Protecting the injured worker's benefits is very important to L&I. He reminded the public that an injured worker has a 90 day window to report his/her injury.

Ms. Bronkema thanked the Commission for allowing her to come speak at our public meetings. Commissioner Gaeta stated that L&I has come a long ways in the last five years and has done a great job of providing language access to the Hispanic community.

**Bruce Neas, Columbia Legal Services and Leslie Owen, Northwest Justice Project**

Mr. Neas informed the public of their one stop shopping center. Columbia Legal Services is a not-for-profit state entity that deals with systemic actions/large issues that impact a lot of people versus just one individual. They do not deal with immigration issues due to their size. They do get involved with major class actions such as Global Horizon's use of the H2A Program which involved importing Tai workers and displacing Yakima workers. Pay Day loan companies preying on undocumented folks, other predatory practices and racial disproportionality are also areas that Columbia Legal gets involved in.

Ms. Owen informed the public of their not-for-profit statewide office that provides free civil legal services to low-income people in the state of Washington. It includes family law, violence in the home, separation, divorce, parenting, etc. They do not have Spanish speaking attorneys but they do hire interpreters on as needed basis. Undocumented folks are represented only if it involves domestic violence. Through the NW Immigrant Project anyone that is a victim of domestic violence and married with a US citizen can get legal status.

There are nine offices and two satellite locations throughout our state. A Volunteer Attorney project is also available to some counties unfortunately it was cut in Grays Harbor county.

**Jenaro Castañeda – Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE)**

Mr. Castañeda explained to the public that in his role as MWBE Program Specialist his goal is to increase the amount of minority businesses that provide products and services to the government. He also explained the certification process that a business has to go through to become a minority firm. One of the benefits of this certification is that they will market the product or service for you through their networking events at no cost to your business. The process takes about forty-five days to complete and once it's completed your business can also qualify for the Late Deposit program. This program will lower your interest rate by 2%, however, credit rating plays a major part in meeting the qualifications.

**Sequoya Hinman, Consulate of Mexico**

Ms. Hinman informed the public that the Seattle Consulate Office represents both the State of Washington and Alaska. The population growth spurt will very likely warrant a future office in either the state of Washington or Alaska. Passports and Consulate ID's better known as Matriculas, power of attorney for family members in Mexico are just a few of the services that the Consulate office provides. The Matricula is now accepted as a valid ID to open a bank account, get your driver license and for identification when stopped by the Police or State Patrol. An ID photo such as a Voter ID card from Mexico, or a Driver License from Mexico along with proof of residency in the State of Washington or Alaska is required to obtain the Matricula.

Commissioner Portugal asked Ms. Hinman if Mexican nationals need to go to Mexico to vote in the upcoming elections. She informed the public that an ID from Mexico has to be obtained in order to vote from here. She also informed the public that the Mexican

Consulate Mobile will be in Wapato on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and in Mt. Vernon on September 24<sup>th</sup>. Their website lists the dates and places where the Mobile unit will be, however, the dates and locations are subject to change.

Other services offered by the Mexican Consulate office are adult education such as primaria, secundaria but not the high school GED. There are also study circles in Yakima.

**Trooper Brian George, Public Information Officer, District 8-WA State Patrol**

Trooper George informed the public that District 8 serves seven counties of the Peninsula which extends from Forks to Astoria. Their priority is to make sure all citizens are SAFE. A leading agency in the US due to their pro-active approach in addressing the racial profiling issue, they are about to begin the last phase of a four phase process. Through this process the all off their contacts were documented and the data was given to researches involved in the development of the Racial Profiling report. The validity of the report is unbiased since it was done by an independent group. There, however, was not enough data to make a conclusive decision on whether agency personnel search when contacts are made.

Trooper George advised the public of their availability to come out and make presentations in both Spanish and English to those interested. They also asked the public to please don't drink and drive.

A member of the community commented that he has heard several complaints from community folks claiming that there is racial profiling.

Commissioner Avalos asked Trooper George if they received diversity training. Per Trooper George they receive diversity training every two years to gain understanding of the different cultures. Chair Gaeta thanked them for taking the lead in the racial profiling issue and suggested that perhaps the Sheriff and local Police should look into doing the same.

Commissioner Tamez mentioned that "El Protector" program is a great program, however, it is only available in Yakima.

A community member asked the Commission to explain why the DOL office was requiring Social Security numbers to obtain/renew driver licenses. The Commission explained that it is a Federal requirement to ask for a social security number, however, there is a form that can be filled out if one does not have a social security number.

**Action Item:** Executive Assistant will follow up with DOL regarding the form and post it in the CHA website.

Another community member shared with the Commission a story on discrimination by racist reps at the DSHS office. She however, persisted and a supervisor provided immediate resolution.

Chair Gaeta advised all that the next public meeting will be in Mt. Vernon on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The Mexican Consulate will be present.

Chair Gaeta publicly thanked his fellow Commissioners and expressed that his five years with the Commission had been very rewarding particularly in the Healthcare and Farm Labor arena. His National Guard commitment had certainly made it challenging and his biggest frustration was how slow change happens. Chair Gaeta encouraged the public to join Commissions and Boards and to work towards making a change.

Commissioner Morton-Lopez presented Chair Gaeta with a card and gift on behalf of all the Commissioners. She acknowledged his skills as a leader and mentor.

Chair made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.