



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

Olympia  
Public Meeting  
December 12, 2005

**Roll Call:**

Commissioners present: Ruben Baca, Rosa Cabrera, Félix L. Negrón, Yvonne Lopez-Morton, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Gabriel Portugal, and Graciela Villanueva-Lopez

Commissioners absent: Diana Avalos, Homero Tamez, and Rebecca Villareal

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez and Alicia Luna

Meeting called to order at 6:01 PM

Meeting began with introduction of Commissioners, Staff, and Volunteers to the general public.

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**Jorge Madrazo, Consulate of Mexico – State of Washington**

Mr. Madrazo has served as Consulate for approximately five years in our state. He has seen our state grow considerably and acknowledges that there are huge challenges ahead for us. He will continue to collaborate with the Commission on Hispanic Affairs and partner with us to address these challenges.

Commissioner Portugal asked the Consulate what was his role in regards to the upcoming election in Mexico. He responded by saying that they will assist in obtaining the necessary paperwork that will need to be filled out prior to being eligible to vote from within the United States. A picture ID and signature on this paperwork is required. It will take about 2 months to obtain the necessary ID to vote. The voting date is May 20, 2006. The Consulate also informed the public that the Commission on Hispanic Affairs is helping out in this endeavor and that it is the first time that Mexican nationals living in the United State will be able to vote without having to go to Mexico. He is hoping that in the future other countries will be willing to offer this voting process to Mexican's living abroad.

Chair Lopez-Morton thanked Consulate Madrazo for his collaboration with the Commission.

**Virgil Clarkson, Mayor for the City of Lacey**

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Mr. Clarkson has been in public office since 1997. He ran for Mayor of Lacey for three reasons. One was to make Lacey a “City of Destination” and have something to be proud of. In 1997 Tumwater had the brewery, Olympia had the Capitol and Lacey had nothing. Today, Lacey has its own Jazz Festival. According to Mayor Clarkson, Lacey was also not prepared electronically in 2000, he; therefore, decided to change this and make it a desirable place to live. He is happy to say that all new and future building construction in Lacey will have the necessary infrastructure. He is also working at making Lacey a diverse city that accepts and welcomes people of different colors. Mr. Clarkson acknowledged that currently there are people of many derivations in his city and he wants them to feel welcome.

Chair Lopez-Morton informed the Mayor that CHA wants to collaborate with him and with the Hispanic community in his city.

Mayor Clarkson stated that currently there are no Hispanics or other ethnic people in his council meetings.

Chair Lopez-Morton advised him that the CHA Director and Commissioner Negrón are available for any issues that might arise. She also informed the public that they were welcomed to get involved in the public council meetings.

Commissioner Negrón stated that he is a resident of Lacey and acknowledged that the city had grown considerably. He also stated that the citizens of Lacey were looking forward to presenting the Matricula Consular to the City Council sometime in the near future. Currently undocumented folks do not have any form of identification other than the Matricula Consular which unfortunately is not accepted as a valid ID in the City of Lacey. CHA will continue to work with the local Police and Sheriff Department with this issue. In addition, they will provide the necessary information and benefits of the Matricula Consular. The same information will be presented to the Mayor.

Mayor Clarkson promised that he would pursue this issue.

Consulate Madrazo informed Mayor Clarkson that several counties in the state of Washington along with several states already recognized the Matricula Consular as a valid ID. He also informed the Mayor that he was prepared to debate with the City Council on this issue.

Chair Lopez-Morton acknowledged the presence of two former CHA Executive Directors, Antonio Ginatta and Christina Guillen-Cook.

### **Representative Brendan Williams – 22<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District Lacey, Tumwater, & Olympia**

Representative Williams thanked CHA for inviting him to attend the public meeting. Prior to his appointment as Representative he worked for a trade association and did extensive traveling. In his many travels he noticed that Hispanics are a silent majority. He, therefore, is looking for ideas from CHA on how he can better represent the Hispanic community.

Commissioner Negrón stated that Representative Williams was very responsive and receptive in accepting the invitation to attend the CHA pubic meeting. He encouraged all constituents to get involved in Government and he also informed the public that bills can be tracked in Spanish during the Legislative session.

**Doug Burt and Arturo Gonzales – CHOICE Regional Health Network**

Mr. Burt said that CHOICE is a non-profit organization that includes six hospitals, five Health departments and several providers in the area. They have field offices in several counties that assist low income people in accessing health insurance through various programs such as DSHS health program, pregnancy health program, Medicare, SHEBA, community organizations like United Way (UGN) and ConneXions (program that weaves numerous organizations that are closely interlinked and that have a capacity for referral of services for primary health, dental, language access, mental health, housing, etc.) ConneXions has a federal complaint software system that includes all community resources and it tracks and measures customer progress.

Mr. Burt also informed the public that due to the 126% increase in the Latino population in our state, CHOICE has established an 800 Spanish line and has also maintained a bilingual staff to serve the Hispanic population. In addition he stated that four thousand slots have been opened up for health coverage of undocumented children for 2006 and that they are currently accepting applications that are due December 14, 2005. The selection process will be via lottery system. Those that do not get selected will be put on a waiting list. They hope to have an additional four thousand eight hundred slots open up in 2007.

Commissioner Portugal asked Mr. Burt what will happen to those that don't get coverage.

Mr. Burt advised Commissioner Portugal that they have the option of signing up for Washington Basic Health; however, there is a cost which include co-payments and a deductible.

Ms. Caraway asked if the undocumented children would have to reapply in 2007 if they were not selected in the 2006 open slot process.

Mr. Burt said that they would.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Donna Obermeyer, Olympia Resident**

Donna thanked CHA for giving her the opportunity to speak at the public meeting. She advised the public that she had read the "State of the State of Latinos" report that was put together by students of Whitman College in Walla Walla and that that had prompted her to come and speak at our public meeting. She advised the public that she belongs to a local organization, the Olympia School District. She stated that every issue of quality and access to education is determined by the school board. She also said that there was a large number of equity and bilingual issues, kids with disabilities that were not represented in Thurston County and that Special Education was poorly funded. She, however, said that there were basic things that folks could do to promote change such as creating an image, getting organized so that our voice could be heard and get the support and respect. This she said would enable us to begin making budget recommendations in our school districts. For questions about organizing to raise community voice for those who have no voice in the education system you can call her on 360-705-1491 or email her at [ob2donna@aol.com](mailto:ob2donna@aol.com). She has access to three local email list serves and previously ran a state list serve and website.

Chair Lopez-Morton stated that it is sad how kids are being assessed. The assessment is simply based on language.

Ms. Obermeyer acknowledged that we need more teachers, interpreters and we need to branch out versus just offering special education. Commissioners can call her for further information and or assistance.

**Nelida Mendoza, Centro Cultural Hispano Americano**

Ms. Mendoza is the Executive Director of Centro Cultural Hispano Americano, a Hispanic American art and culture organization. Their mission is to inform, preserve, interpret and promote the Hispanic American culture, folklore and traditions of all the Hispanic American countries, including Brazil, Spain and Portugal. Through her cultural events they are able to fund art scholarships for low income Hispanics. Her website provides a web calendar and links to other Hispanic organizations.

**Martha Davies,**

Ms. Davies informed the public about the Portal from Mexico-Portal Educativo Conevyt which has an extensive menu of on line courses to complete your education. In addition it has information and services, a library, and other educational linkages.

**Alejandro Rugarcia, Safe Place**

Mr. Rugarcia works for Safe Place, a non profit that for the last twenty three years has provided free of charge security and support to survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Mr. Rugarcia informed the public that men are also survivors of violence and that they are also welcome at Safe Place. He also asked the public for assistance with ITN. Since September 11, ITN is no longer available and that the IRS has no power in re-implementing it. Undocumented folks pay taxes but unfortunately are not able to recover what they have paid out due to no access to ITN. Safe Place funds are limited; therefore, he would welcome any and all assistance with this issue.

**Dr. Miguel Pupiales, International Medical Associates of Bellingham, P. C.**

Dr. Pupiales is a board certified anesthesiologist who treats acute chronic pain. His office specializes in evidence based science of back injuries and accurate diagnosis of pain. Because accurate diagnosis ultimately provides the key to successful treatment, initial evaluation focuses on identifying the particular structures involved in the generation of pain. Once an accurate diagnosis has been made, therapeutic options, based on what has been proven by evidence-based science, may be considered. Dr Pupiales stated that they do not use MRI's for diagnosis due to their limited value in identifying the structural cause of spine-related pain. Their office has seen an increase of injured farm workers due to their office having a cultural native Spanish speaking doctor. They have a website which is in Spanish and have taken the time to translate their forms to Spanish. Seamar is working with them in this endeavor and his office is there to serve the Hispanic community.

**Steve Hyer, Executive Director, Foundation for Private Enterprise Education – Washington Business Week**

Mr. Hyer informed the public of WA Business Week which was started by an association of businesses in 1976 to teach high school kids about teamwork environment and college environment. Through this program kids are given an opportunity and the tools to take control of their lives. During his presentation to CHA at the Wenatchee public meeting he mentioned that his goal was to get **all** kids involved in WA Business Week. Forty three Hispanic kids participated this past summer and Mr. Hyer asked CHA to help him get the word out to all Hispanic kids of this wonderful program that undeniably will help in decreasing the high school drop out rate. Between two hundred fifty and three hundred kids participate in this business camp program which ends with a trade show environment and an amazing experience by all. They are divided up in small work groups and they are unaware of who is rich, poor, etc. Adult mentors who speak Spanish are also part of the program. The total cost of this business camp program is \$900; however, the kids only pay \$295 to participate. Low-income kids can participate even if they cannot afford to pay the fee. WA Business Week summer camp, will be held at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma on June 2006.

Commissioner Portugal informed Mr. Hyer that the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce chapters might be of assistance to him in getting the word out to Hispanic kids.

Ms. Inigues thanked Mr. Hyer for their wonderful summer camp program in which her younger brother participated and thoroughly enjoyed.

#### **Oscar Trinidad, Certified Special Education Teacher**

Mr. Trinidad informed the public that he is one of 1100 certified teachers in this state and only one of four Hispanic teachers. He has experienced discrimination and was nearly fired from his teacher position. He told the public that they need to demand knowing why there are not enough teachers of Hispanic descent. According to Mr. Trinidad, the current affirmative action plans of school districts are nothing but rhetoric. When he questioned the policies of his school district they could not find them. He would like the public to challenge the school districts and to look closely at the numbers which have not changed since the 60's and 70's. He said that shame on us as parents if we didn't ask these questions. We need not settle with the rhetoric for this is what is holding us back. We don't have Hispanic role models and people of power are not moving forward. It is no wonder that our kids are saying, why should I go to college.

Commissioner Portugal informed Mr. Trinidad that the school districts are saying that they are having a difficult time finding Hispanic teachers.

Mr. Trinidad stated that there is no support for our Hispanic kids.

Chair Lopez Morton informed Mr. Trinidad that the Commissioners had been tasked to contact the superintendents in their communities and to start a dialogue on this very same issue.

Mr. Trinidad said that in order to form a pool of teachers one had to go to the force that is moving this, the Latino teachers versus to the head of the horse, the superintendent.

Chair Lopez Morton said that we are getting more and more minority kids and that we need to work together on this issue.

Ms. Davies stated that unfortunately the Latino's are not united and that we would not see any change unless we united and started working together.

Ms. Mendoza stated that it was an immigrant issue.

Mr. Trinidad disagreed and said that Hispanic immigrant kids are bilingual within two years of being in school.

**Christina Guillen-Cook, Conexion Latina**

Ms. Guillen-Cook is President of Conexion Latina, a non profit organization out of Tacoma. Their organization is politically involved and working with a legislative committee on immigration and education issues. She agreed that the Hispanic kid's dream has been taken away and that we are not engaging students and parents. Per Ms. Guillen, Galt School in Tacoma has taken steps in turning this around. They have translated school papers and have a made a video in the hopes of engaging and connecting students and parents. They have also identified students who want to pursue a health career and have been successful in getting PLU to give them two slots. Now the goal is to have kids ready for these slots. She has held receptions in her home, the first art exhibit and the first Día de los Muertos and it is her hope to build a sense of community involvement with these events and to be able to provide scholarships for Hispanic kids. Their website is [www.conneccionlatina](http://www.conneccionlatina)

Chair Lopez Morton stated that we are working in silos in our Hispanic communities and that we need to work in collaboration and have a unified voice.

Commissioner Baca said that the issues presented were all valid and true and that as parents we look at them as challenges. He also said that when we talk to the community we need to be unified.

**Carlos Jimenez, Grupo Mexico**

Mr. Jimenez stated that we are a diverse community and that we have been extremely disengaged. He, however, said that we are beginning to get engaged from east to west, from north to south, in urban areas and in suburbs, etc. We need to get Latino advocates and leaders to talk about issues that are growing in our communities, even issues such as the demand for taco trucks.

Mr. Jimenez also asked the public to get involved in the upcoming Latino Legislative Day. He informed the public that we are a major buying force. We buy more tennis shoes, more jeans, and food from McDonald's in the state of Washington. He said that it is sad to say that in every meeting the numbers of Hispanics in attendance are few. People, we are part of the problem, said Mr. Jimenez. We need to sit down and have a dialogue to unite and help each other out. We are here to stay so let's engage in this endeavor and be with us at the Latino Legislative Day on February 8, 2006 at the State Capitol in Olympia.

Chair Lopez Morton thanked guests and the general public for attending the public meeting and informed them that they were welcome to stay for the official business part of the meeting if they so pleased.

**CHA OFFICIAL BUSINESS CONVENED AT 8:20 PM**

CHA official business started with roll call. Commissioners Tamez, and Avalos were absent and unexcused. Commissioners Contreras and Villareal were absent and excused.

### **Old Business**

Commissioner Lopez-Morton asked if there was any discussion of the Mt. Vernon Public Meeting minutes. There was no discussion; therefore, Commissioner Portugal made a motion to approve the Mt. Vernon minutes. Commissioner Negrón seconded the motion.

### **Vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.**

Chair Lopez Morton advised the Commissioners that a report of their meetings with superintendents in their respective communities regarding education issues was due by the next public meeting. She stated that it was very important that each Commissioner establish a relationship with the superintendents as well as with the principals.

Commissioner Negrón stated that he just had a meeting with the Olympia School District and learned that all school forms that are sent home are in English. The fact that the forms are all in English; caused an error in the placement of a child in ESL in spite of the fact that she did not speak Spanish. Recommendations to address this issue were made and they now have a District level coordinator who will be making contact with the Hispanic community.

Chair Lopez Morton reiterated the importance and criticality of establishing partnerships with the superintendents and making contact with our Legislators.

Commissioner Negrón mentioned that Senator Fraser was out of town and unable to attend our public meeting and that Representative Hunt who was raised in Yakima would have attended had she not been out of town also. He also stated that he has been making contacts with Mayors, Senators, etc. He will also follow up with a thank you letter to both Mayor Clarkson and Representative Williams for attending our public meeting.

Chair Lopez Morton reminded all Commissioners that their reports are due the Friday prior to our public meeting. Commissioner Villareal and Commissioner Avalos reports were not received as of today.

Chair also informed the Commissioners that they can participate in the Legislative Latino Day on February 8, 2006; however, not in their Commissioner role. Mr. Jimenez has established a new website ([www.Hispaniclegislateday.org](http://www.Hispaniclegislateday.org)) for all those interested in keeping up with the latest happenings. He also has meetings that are held every Tuesday night via conference call.

### **New Business**

#### **Director's Report**

Director Iñiguez asked the Commissioners if they had any questions/discussion regarding the amendments made to the administrative policies. If no questions or discussion approval was needed.

He informed the Commissioners that the Annual Report and Newsletter were completed and available on the CHA shared drive and that the Legislative Agenda was approved by the

Governor. He also advised them that he will be involved in the Diversity Health Summit follow-up meetings in January 2006.

In regards to the Education Forum that was held in Marysville, he said that he was quoted in a newspaper article which apparently brought some flack to the Governor. He informed the Commissioners that we cannot take a stance on the WASL and that this coming Wednesday the Governor would comment on her stance.

He stated that the Commissioners have more power as members when it comes to advising and making recommendations to the Governor. They can certainly take a position that does not agree with the Governor. The Director is there to advice but he cannot tell them what to do. We do need to keep her informed on hot topics so that she is not caught off guard.

The Director mentioned that Richland has decided that they will not go with the WASL. Terry Bergeson went to Richland; however, we do not know the outcome of her visit.

He stated that he met with DSHS personnel to address the WA Managed Service program and the perception that Hispanics were targeted in the midst of the reduction program. He wrote a letter and is awaiting their reply.

In regards to the TANF- The recommendations were harsh thus the letter which was signed by CHA, CAA, and CAPAA to the Governor. Kudos to Graciela for bringing this to our attention! The Governor listened and that generated the meetings with leaders of the community. Recommendations were made at these meetings but now the hard part begins; the part where the rules are changed. Additional meetings will occur before they go into session.

Kansas City Trip – The Director said that it was the first conference on a national level and that he had come back with many good ideas on what others are doing. He asked the Commissioners to check out Utah's website to see what great things they are doing. Their Legislative Day is put together by university students and it draws thousands of people.

He also informed the Commissioners that the Financial Institution folks saved monies by having him do the money gram commercial for the Hispanic community. They will continue to work with CHA on future programs.

### **Issues, concerns, and questions with the Administrative Policies**

Commissioner Villanueva-Lopez had the following concerns:

Chapter 4 – 4.40.20 Accrual of Overtime for Overtime Exempt Employees

The Director stated that this is DOP verbiage. Exchange time versus comp time.

Chapter 4 – 4.130.30 Employee Disclosure Act (Whistleblower)

The key here is: other remedies exist

Chapter 6 – 6.20.10 Public Meetings – Does not specify that a conference call will count as a meeting.

The Director stated that a conference call will count as a meeting.

Chapter 2 – 2.30.10 Typing error in non-schedule.

Per the Director the correction will be made in the final copy.

Commissioner Negrón commented that “prudent decisions on Reimbursement of Travel” was vague and ambiguous.

Commissioner Villanueva made a motion to approve the Administrative Policies as amended. Commissioner Baca seconded the motion.

**Vote was taken and all voted yay.**

Chair Lopez Morton asked the Commissioners to read Ricardo Sanchez’s letter and to decide as a Commission if they will support him. Discussion can be done via email.

Commissioner Negrón made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Villanueva-Lopez seconded the motion.

**Vote was taken and all voted unanimously to adjourn.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM