



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Omak
Study Session Minutes
April 25, 2008

I. Call to Order. Meeting was called to order at 1:09 PM by Chair Portillo Salazar.

II. Roll Call. Commissioners present: Jorge Chacón, Victor Chacón, Gabriel Portugal, and Lourdes Portillo Salazar

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez and Alicia Luna

III. Guests

Rene Maldonado, welcomed the Commission and shared the following:

- Introduced Danny Dominguez, President of MECHA
- Great need for jobs in Omak
- Not enough financial help for students
- Undocumented students in dire need of financial help

Commissioners proceeded with introductions as well as introduction of MECHA members.

Mary Doherty, Wenatchee Valley College Omak Campus Dean shared the following:

- Grateful for CHA's visit to Omak and for meeting with MECHA members
- MECHA a very eclectic and committed group
- Latino students very involved and serious about their studies
- Tremendous hope with the Dream Act; however, lots of work still to be done
- Familial Economy in need of change
- May 3rd Pow Wow event in Omak sponsored by the Red Road Association
- Introduced Juanita de la Cerda, Vice President for MECHA; pursuing nursing career

Commissioner Chacon informed MECHA members of the actions the Appropriations Committee of the Arizona House of Representatives was taking to ban groups like MECHA.

MECHA members wanted to know if there was something they could do in regards to this issue.

Commissioner Portugal suggested the CHA send information/links regarding the Arizona MECHA issue to Danny Dominguez or Juanita de la Cerda. They could then disseminate the information to their members and take action. He also suggested that they involve the

210 11th Ave Suite 301A PO Box 40924 Olympia, WA 98504-0924
Toll-Free: (800) 443-0294 Olympia: (360) 725-5661 Fax: (360) 360-586-9501

www.cha.wa.gov hispanic@cha.wa.gov

Legislature and to present a well crafted and organized resolution at their regional conference.

Other suggestions were:

- Get up to date info from <http://www.truthinimmigration.org/>
- Become guardians of the community; become sentinels for factions coming into the community
- 1st and 14th Amendments protects all including undocumented folks
- Rene/MECHA write a letter to the Governor regarding cap on tuition; acknowledge what she has done so far and ask her for her continued support

Challenges for Wenatchee Valley College students are:

- Cost of Gas
- Childcare costs

Opportunities to overcome challenges:

- Opportunity grants provide money for gas, childcare, etc.
- Foundation money is available
- In-state grants for undocumented students will be introduced in next year's legislation by Ricardo Sanchez
- MECHA can lobby for foundation to provide more money to increase number of students
- Latino Legislative Day is also a venue where MECHA can voice their concerns and make a difference

H2A Workers:

- Law says that orchard owners/rancher must prove that there is a shortage of workers before using H2A workers
- H2A is cost prohibitive

Rene stated that there is an office in Yakima that provides H2A workers. He feels that this will undermine immigration reform.

Uriel suggested that they get enough farmers and have a dialogue with Doc Hastings. He also mentioned that Senator Cantwell and Murray are both on board with immigration reform.

Rene and MECHA members made a commitment to help us write testimonies during 2009 legislative session. In turn CHA will assist them with College Day in Olympia.

IV. CHA Business

Meeting format: East and West public meetings not functional; Attendance for Commissioners that live to far from remote places where meetings will take place will be excused

Chair Portillo Salazar informed the Commissioners that the L&I Manager had apparently not been informed of the need to have an L&I representative at the public meeting; therefore, one will not be in attendance. Presenters will be invited via a formal letter in the future.

Action Item: Commissioner Jorge Chacón will follow up with the L&I Manager and set up meeting dedicated to L&I issues

Chair Portillo Salazar went over public meeting format before adjourning the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5PM!



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Study Session
April 26, 2008

I. Call to Order. Meeting was called to order at 8:02 by Chair Portillo Salazar

II. Roll Call. Commissioners Present: Jorge Chacón, Victor Chacón, Gabriel Portugal, and Lourdes Portillo Salazar

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez and Alicia Luna

III. Public Meeting Action Items

- Chair Portillo Salazar and Commissioner J. Chacón will draft letter to ESD Commissioner and L&I Director
- Commissioner Chacon will send thank you letters to Mr. Maldonado, Wenatchee Valley College Dean, and Mayor Sparber
- Commissioner V. Chacón will send thank you letter to Ms. Dominguez
- Chair will draft letter to the Governor regarding Commissioner Gutierrez
- Set up Conference Call to discuss and vote on Commissioner Gutierrez issue
- Commissioner J. Chacon will set up L&I meeting; invites will include
 - WA State Human Rights Commission
 - NW Justice Project & Columbia Legal
 - Legislators
 - Mediation Organization
- Commissioner V. Chacon will set up OSPI meeting; items to be discussed
 - Parental Involvement including existing data and grants
 - Commissioner V. Chacon will prepare the agenda
 - Migrant Bilingual Education vacancy
 - Audits and compliance of RCW
 - Statewide Teacher Exchange with Mexico
 - Representation in Cabinet

IV. Guests

Rene and Mr. Maldonado, 1st Generation Hispanic Orchard Owners

- Many challenges in the rural area; cowboy mentality, Native Americans, Progressive liberals, etc.; community has come to accept Latino growers
- Sheriff's office take undocumented directly to ICE versus jail; they also use ICE personnel for interpreting
- 17 Latino families joined United Growers in 1997 unfortunately abuse disbanded the group

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- Much L&I abuse especially in Brewster; Dr. Frees evaluates and reopens cases
- Registered nurses perform evaluation of injured workers due to shortage of Doctors; injured workers are diagnosed incorrectly
- Grower's issue; lack of workers due to remoteness
- Unemployment issues; mistrust amongst our people because of the treatment we have received
- School counselors do not help Latinos; they treat them as second class citizens
- Many kids from Tonasket schools are going to college
- Migrant PAC's are controlled by the school districts
- Maldonado's promote education amongst Latinos; students however have missed many opportunities due to not being informed

Commissioner Portugal asked if they had established a relationship with other local growers since the disintegration of the United Growers.

Mr. Maldonado stated that a person from Wenatchee has assisted them with agriculture issues i.e. reduction on use of chemicals and the cost of chemicals. The local Anglo growers; however, do not want to work with her.

Commissioner Portugal suggested that the Maldonado's and other local growers unite as a group and present a "shortage of workers" petition to Doc Hastings. He also asked them if they thought this was possible.

Mr. Maldonado's reply was that the "Anglo growers" still had not fully accepted Latino growers. He added that Anglo growers still want to pay old wages and they remove workers from farm housing as soon as the work season is over.

The challenge according to Commissioner Portugal is to form a Growers Association and present a structured agenda on what they want to derive from it.

The Maldonado's stated that they were doing quite well until Maldonado senior got sick. Currently there are eleven Latino growers that are organized by Luz Bazan. She has sent three Latino growers to Washington DC & has seventy non-existent members registered.

He is aware that red and green apples are popular in Mexico. He would like assistance in exporting to Mexico.

Action Item: Alicia will send the following to Mr. Maldonado at rmaldonado@wvc.edu:

- CTED contact information
- Antonio Sanchez's contact information
- Patricia Arnold's contact information

Commission decided to reinstate the "all Commissioner attendance" at public meetings beginning with the Shelton meeting in June.

Action Item: Alicia will reserve a conference room for Education Committee members for April 30, 2008.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM