



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Quincy
Public Meeting
August 18, 2006

Roll Call:

Commissioners present: Ruben Baca, Yvonne López-Morton, Félix L. Negrón, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Gabriel Portugal, and Rebecca Villareal

Commissioners absent: Victor Chacon (Excused) and Tim Lopez (Not Excused)

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez, Alicia Luna, Mike Britt, and Caitlin Simmons

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM

Chair Lopez-Morton welcomed all those in attendance and thanked them for their participation in the public meeting. In addition, former Governor Mike Lowry's presence was acknowledged.

The meeting proceeded with introduction of the CHA Commissioners and acknowledgement of the CHA Director, staff and volunteers.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Adrian Moroles, Campaña Quetzal gave an overview of his organization whose primary focus is addressing the Hispanic students' achievement gap in comparison to Caucasian students. For the past three years Sea Mar Community Health Centers and El Centro de la Raza have jointly sponsored Campaña Quetzal, a Seattle Latino education coalition comprised of concerned citizens whose mission is student success.

Campaña Quetzal's March 2005 Seattle Latino Educational Summit which drew in more than 500 participants including Latino parents, Latino agency representatives, OSPI, state representatives and educators was instrumental in the drafting and adoption of their nine Latino Education resolutions. These resolutions have since become the blueprint for children's success in the Seattle School District.

Mr. Moroles stressed the importance of community empowerment and participation and recruitment of Latino Teachers and instructional staff (not janitors, cooks, etc.). He also

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

stated that kids perform better and are more excited when there is parent leadership. Mr. Moroles can be reached on 253-627-2250.

The meeting was turned over to the Vice-Chair and carried out in Spanish due to the number of limited English proficient who joined the meeting.

Veronica Bronkema, Labor & Industries, shared information regarding job safety, particularly “heat stress”. She advised those in attendance that heat stress is not only an issue in agriculture but in construction, warehousing, etc. Another job safety issue is pesticides; both in the application process and in the harvesting of crops.

Ms. Bronkema also stated that all workers with or without legal status have the right to be covered for any on-the-job injury regardless if it’s a temporary or long term disability. L&I will provide interpreters for doctor visits if related with any on-the-job injury. In addition, she explained that all workers have a right to breaks, lunch, minimum wage, restrooms, and wash basins at their place of employment. They also have a right to file a claim if their employer fails to pay them for all hours worked. She stressed the importance of documenting in detail; dates, hours worked, employers name and the job site/address.

Michele Besso, Northwest Justice Project, stated that at this point and time there is no amnesty or law to legalize immigrants status; therefore, do not give your hard earned money to predators claiming that they will put you on a waiting list. She also stated that I-946 did not pass due to lack of signatures.

Ms. Besso informed the community at large that NW Justice Project has a newspaper “El Faro” as of this year that contains valuable information such as worker rights, pesticide safety, public services, etc. Farmworkers rights which are included in “El Faro” state that you may be able to file a lien against an employer’s crop or orchard if he/she does not pay you for hours worked. These liens, however; must be filed within 40 days from the last day of work or 40 days from the end of the season. An attorney should be contacted right away if there is a need to file a lien. She also stated that it is crucial to log hours worked, the numbers or piece work completed, dates, work site address, and the name of the employer.

Elmer Dias, Department of Health, shared information on lead and arsenic and its dangers. Lead arsenate was the major pesticide used in orchards some sixty years ago. Today homes and schools have been built on some of these sites which unfortunately have the potential of containing elevated levels of lead and arsenic in the soil. Young children are at greater risk due to their exposure to dirt and if their home or school was built in these former orchard sites. An exposure level above 10 is toxic and can produce mental and behavioral problems. In addition it can cause learning issues in children.

School playgrounds have a high level of contamination; therefore, Washington State enacted a law and has made it a priority to address and control this issue. Lead based paint, Hispanic candies such as Zarcon, Chili, and Tamarindo, some jewelry, and clay pots are also harmful as well due to their lead content.

Some of the symptoms of exposure are stomach ache and behavioral and learning problems. Long term affects are not detectable, therefore; a blood test is recommended if you suspect that you have been exposed to these substances.

Steps to reduce exposure are: wash your hands, bathe, clean your shoes, and wash your clothes separately. Residue on clothes, hands, etc. will invariably increase toxic levels in children. Mr. Dias provided handouts both in Spanish and English and a toll free number (800-222-1222) for folks to call for additional information.

Alan Rammer, Department of Fish and Wildlife shared information on law enforcement and compliance and the need to reach out and better serve the Hispanic community. He stated that the mission of his department was to preserve, conserve, and perpetuate our natural resources.

Mr. Rammer also stated that he is aware that press releases and information sharing is not a one size fits all. He asked for assistance and suggestions on the best way to disseminate information to the Hispanic community and for their input on issues that were of importance to them. The objective was to heighten their level of understanding, prevent them from getting tickets, and preserve natural resources for their children and grandchildren.

He added that his department currently broadcasts law compliance information in Spanish in the Othello area. They also have brochures, pamphlets, and videos. Mr. Rammer mentioned that an information video could be produced using teens as actors. He also said that the Department of Fish and Wildlife currently has a few bilingual and multi-cultural agents, however; efforts at recruiting additional are in the pipeline

A member of the community suggested he get in touch with the Quincy Multi-Cultural group to assist in the dissemination of the information.

Ex-Governor Mike Lowry, Wafa shared that he is the Executive Director of a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide home ownership for farmworkers. Washington Agricultural Families Assistance (Wafa) farm worker family homeownership program has already built 10 homes in Ephrata, 5 in Royal City and their goal is to build another 24 homes over an eighteen month period in Quincy beginning this fall.

The basic requirement for qualifying for this program is that some of the applicant's income must come from agricultural labor. Another requirement is that the applicant must be a U.S. citizen or have legal status.

Wafa recognizes that agricultural workers are important contributors to Washington's economy, yet many still face the challenge of finding a decent place to live. This program will assist in providing new homeowners with desirable quality standard homes that consist of 3 bedrooms, two baths, and double garage.

For further information, please call Ivy Nuñez on 1-866-272-6555.

Michele Danley, GET Program shared information on the Guaranteed Education Program (GET). The GET program is administered by the Washington Higher Education

Coordinating Board and was created by the Governor and the Legislature to help families save for college. The State of Washington guarantees that the money you save for your child's college education will keep pace with the rising college tuition.

Ms. Danley provided brochures and informational sheets to higher education financial links, GET custom monthly payment plans, and GET's cancellation and refund policy. Additional information is available via their website: www.get.wa.gov or by calling 1-877-438-8848.

Pastor Magallanes thanked the Commission for taking the time to present a public meeting in Quincy.

Chair Lopez Morton informed the community of the Commissioner vacant position and asked that anyone interested in applying contact us on 1-800-443-0294 for additional information.

CHA Official Business: Official business commenced at 9:00 PM

Approval of Minutes

Chair Lopez Morton confirmed that there was a quorum and asked if there was any discussion on the Yakima Public Meeting minutes; no discussion on minutes.

Commissioner Portillo Salazar made a motion to approve the Yakima public meeting minutes. Commissioner Negrón seconded the motion.

A vote was taken with all in favor. The motion was carried.

Old Business

Commissioner made a motion for the Commission to draft a letter to the Governor outlining the issues with DSHS and to have all Commissioners review and approve before sending to the Governor. Commissioner Baca seconded the motion.

A vote was taken with all in favor. The motion carried.

Commissioner Portugal made a motion for the Commission to draft a letter requesting for a meeting with the Governor. Commissioner Portillo Salazar seconded the motion.

A vote was taken with all in favor. The motion carried.

Commissioner Negrón made a motion for the Commission to approve and send the letter to the Governor by September 1, 2006.

A vote was taken with all in favor. The motion carried.

Commissioner Portugal made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Negrón seconded the motion.

A vote was taken with all in favor. The motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.