

Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs (ICHLA)
Commission Meeting Minutes
Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room 14
3/16/06

Attendance:

Mistie Morales - Designee, Dept. of Correction
Adolfo Solis - House Lay Member
Dr. Mary Ilu Altman – Senate Lay Member
Judge Gregory Kellam Scott – Indiana Civil Rights Commission Director
Frances Vega – Senate Lay Member
Manuel Gonzalez – Senate Lay Member
Carmen Quintana – Designee, Department of Health
Claudia Ontiveros Fuentes – Designee, Indiana Economic Development Corporation
Lawrence McCormack – Proxy, Senator Vi Simpson
Rita Cano – House Lay Member
Representative John Aguilera – House Democrat (Proxy)
Samuel Ruiz - House Lay Member

Staff:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director
Laura Barrett
Ryan C. Marques

Audience:

James Evans, Indiana Department of Revenue
Brad Hoffman, Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles

I. Call to Order & Establish Quorum

A. Establish Quorum

Chair Gonzalez brought the commission meeting to order at approximately 10:13am and a quorum was established that consisted on 12 Commissioners.

II. Commission Business

A. Adoption of Minutes

Chair Gonzalez motioned for the acceptance of the 1/31/06 commission minutes. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Commissioner Frances Vega and seconded by Commissioner Carmen Quintana. Motion carried by all in attendance.

B. Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Fuentes made reference to the commission budget worksheet which entailed allocations, operations expenditures, additional expenditures and options for additional dollars for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30th, 2006 and from July 1, 2006 to June 30th, 2007. Commissioner Fuentes noted that \$65,000 still remained from Fiscal Year 2004-2005. The Commission can direct the \$65,000 into more research projects or future conferences. Commissioner Fuentes stated that the budget worksheet displayed a break down of expenditures for the next six months with an additional break down of allocated funding directed towards each committee's conference fees, research and meeting expenses.

Executive Director Mendoza stated that there were nine goals developed during the Commission's retreat (12/05) which the Commission should accomplish this year. Director Mendoza noted that these goals will be addressed during the strategic plan discussion.

Commissioner Fuentes stated that the Commission's last conference (10/05) cost \$50,000.

Commissioner Altman asked if the Commission had received all of the payments from the conference and if the \$50,000 has been allocated into the current budget.

Director Mendoza stated that the Commission has not received the full amount of payments and the Treasurer will draft a conference budget worksheet entailing expenditures and revenue for the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Altman mentioned if the Treasurer had included the \$2,500 donation to the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research project in the current budget.

Commissioner Fuentes stated that the Commission can use the \$10,000 that is available for the Research Committee to pay for \$2,500 donation.

Commissioner Fuentes mentioned that Fannie Mae donated \$750 for the Civil Rights and Housing Committee.

The Treasurer's report was accepted by general consensus of the Commission.

C. Annual Report

Director Mendoza proceeded to guide each commissioner through the Commission's Annual Report for 2004-2005.

Director Mendoza stated that a few minor alterations still exist and the report should be finalized as of today or tomorrow.

Commissioner Altman stated that in addition to submitting the report to the Governor, it is important to draft a cover letter with an attached document entailing the most vital/urgent recommendations in order to provide enough time for the Governor to act on any important recommendation in favor of the State of Indiana and the Hispanic/Latino community.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that the most urgent recommendation that the Governor must address is the DREAM Act.

Commissioner Ruiz stated that it is important to promote the Commission's Annual Report to the Indiana Hispanic/Latino community through a press release.

Vice Chair Vega suggested the Commission should hold a press conference in promotion of the Commission's Annual Report

Chair Gonzalez stated that it is important to have the Commission's Annual Report translated.

Director Mendoza mentioned that there are currently 3 translating companies registered with the state.

Chair Gonzalez made a motion to accept the report with recommendations. The motion was accepted.

Commissioner Altman asserted that it is important that the Commission receive a direct response in a timely fashion from the Governor regarding the Commission's Annual Report.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that the Commission must look to Juana Watson for help in communicating with the Governor about the report and other matters.

Commissioner Morales stated that through her efforts the Commission now has the attention of one of the Governor's top policy advisors.

Chair Gonzalez stated that it is important that Juana Watson become more of an active participant in communicating with the Governor regarding the Commission's initiatives, strategic plans, goals and reports.

Commissioner Scott asserted that it is important that each agency leader and department head of the state receive the Commission's report and make a formal response to it. He mentioned that a response from the executive office must be coordinated through each department head and agency leader, for instance the BMV, Department of Health, etc. Commissioner Scott also stated that it would be in the Commission's best interest to set up meeting dates with department heads and agency leaders in order to address the recommendations and to see how each department and agency has implemented new strategies after receiving the report and communicating with the Commission. A time frame of 3-5 months was mentioned in order to receive feed back from each state department and agency regarding what they have done to address the Commission's recommendations.

Commissioner Altman stressed that the Commission must receive feedback from the Governor regarding the Commission's report.

Commissioner Altman mentioned the idea of creating a plan A and a plan B. Plan A entailed translating the entire report while plan B consisted of translating the recommendations only.

Chair Gonzalez strongly recommended that the Commission's entire report be translated and how the Commission must carefully determine which registered translating company will best meet the needs of the Commission.

Vice Chair Vega stated that there is an educational agency that will translate educational reports for free.

Proxy McCormack mentioned that the Commission should produce a brochure containing every recommendation from the Commission's report in order to pass out to people during conferences, meetings and forums.

Chair Gonzalez motioned for the report to be translated and then immediate production of the brochure.

Commissioner Scott recommended that the Chair and the Executive Director make the decision in choosing which translating company will best suit the Commission's needs. The recommendation was accepted by general consensus.

A motion was made by Commissioner Frances Vega and seconded by Commissioner Carmen Quintana to translate the Commission's 2004 – 2005 Report of Findings & Recommendations, create a report "brief" and press release. Motion carried by all in attendance.

D. Strategic Plan

Chair Gonzalez stated that the majority of the commissioners present at today's meeting attended the Commission's retreat in December, 2005.

Director Mendoza proceeded to guide each Commissioner through the Commission's Strategic Plan.

Chair Gonzalez stated that one of the Commission's main objectives is to research and address problems. Chair Gonzalez mentioned that one way the Commission can improve on this objective is through the creation and active participation of the committees. He asserted that each committee should evaluate other programs or models throughout the country that relate to each committee's theme and objective. Chair Gonzalez notified the Commission that each state commission will be under review next year; therefore, we must author our own report and strive to work with each department head and agency leader. He asserted that each committee chair and member should act to look at and attend different conferences around the state and nation to possibly learn different initiatives and strategies in addressing relevant issues and problems in the Hispanic/Latino community. Chair Gonzalez called for more active participation from each Commission member. Chair Gonzalez discussed his meeting with Director Mendoza and Senator Garton and explained that Senator Garton's first statement addressed the attendance and participation rate of his appointee and every other commissioner. Chair Gonzalez stated that he affirmed Senator Garton that every commissioner has been attending and participating. Chair Gonzalez asserted that the committee goals are attainable through each commissioner's individual knowledge and expertise, but a high level of active participation is the main engine that will produce success and results.

Commissioner Morales stated that the Commission must involve the community and other leaders to actively participate in each committee.

Chair Gonzalez stated that each commission member must find a way to empower the Commission. Chair Gonzalez mentioned that the Commission must leverage Juana Watson's position with the Governor; how can this Commission help the Governor through Juana Watson and how can Juana Watson help the Commission. Chair Gonzalez asserted that in the past many Commission reports have been submitted to the Governor's Office. Chair Gonzalez stated that the Governor's Office has failed in directly responding to these past reports, but he hopes that the Governor will respond to the Commission's recent annual report due to the vital information, recommendations and action plan that the Commission has developed in the report.

Commissioner Morales stated that we must receive a direct response from each State Legislator and State Senator regarding the Commission's annual report.

Commissioner Solis mentioned that it is important for each commissioner to talk with their respective State Representative and State Senator regarding the Commission's annual report and other matters that the Hispanic/Latino population encounters every day.

Commissioner Altman asked each commissioner to look at the previous Commission meeting minutes regarding Juana Watson's response to Chair Gonzalez's question in how Juana Watson is planning to work and provide a strong link between the Governor and the Commission. Commissioner Altman stated that Juana Watson did not present a clear answer to Chair Gonzalez's question.

Chair Gonzalez and Commissioner Altman both agreed that the Commission must write a letter to Juana Watson addressing how she will work with the Commission and provide a link between the Governor and the Commission.

Commissioner Altman also mentioned that Juana Watson must define a clear goal through her work with the Governor and the Commission. Commissioner Altman proceeded to address Juana Watson's lack of explanation regarding Juana Watson's work with the cultural awareness centers and Commissioner Altman also asked for a plan or outline from Juana Watson addressing what territories Juana Watson will cover when expanding the cultural awareness centers.

Director Mendoza stated that she will send a letter to Juana Watson addressing the need for Juana Watson to work with the Commission and provide a strong link between the Governor's Office and the Commission.

Commissioner Altman suggested that Chair Gonzalez review the letter before it is sent to Juana Watson.

Commissioner Mary Ilu Altman made a motion to accept the Commission's strategic plan as a "living document" with the freedom to update and change and update the plan as needed with the Commission's approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gregory Kellam Scott and carried by all in attendance.

E. Committee Participation & Commissioner Expectations

Director Mendoza proceeded to explain the worksheet entailing commission member expectations.

Chair Gonzalez asserted that any person is welcome to volunteer and join a committee from the outside community: you do not have to be a commission member in order to join a committee.

Director Mendoza mentioned that each committee should have at least 3 members.

Commissioner Altman asked if future Commission meetings could take place on a different day.

Director Mendoza stated that she sent calendars two months ago (with the expectation of receiving the calendars back) to each commission member in order for each member to choose which dates work best for them regarding Commission meetings, committee meetings or public forums. She stated that Commissioners did not send the calendars back.

Chair Gonzalez asked Director Mendoza to email each commissioner regarding which day works best for them.

F. Recent Issues in Review

1. ACLU lawsuit regarding 21st Century Scholars Program

Commissioner Altman stressed that the Commission must take caution when addressing this issue and remain neutral. Commissioner Altman also stated that the Commission must look at the criteria of this program and possibly revise it.

Proxy, Representative Aguilera proceeded to explain the 21st Century Scholars Program.

Commissioner Morales stated that the Commission must look at the main issue of the lawsuit which centers on the lack of parental citizenship.

Vice Chair Vega stated that the main problem involves the questions posed in the FASFA form.

Commissioner Scott stated that the Commission must look at the citizenship of the child. Commissioner Scott proceeded to explain that education is a civil right under the civil rights law and if any child is blocked from receiving a scholarship, it is a violation of the civil rights law. Commissioner Scott mentioned that this is a large concern for both the Indiana Civil Rights Commission and ICHLA. Commissioner Scott asserted that both commissions must address the scholarship requirement of parental citizenship.

Chair Gonzalez stated that if you are a citizen how does this requirement of parental citizenship affect your basic civil rights. Chair Gonzalez mentioned that the research committee should look into this problem in accordance with the Commission for Higher Education.

Vice Chair Vega stated that the Commission must assign a timeline of the Commission's response regarding this lawsuit.

Commissioner Altman stated that the Commission must take a very serious look at the DREAM Act.

Chair Gonzalez requested that the Commission must look to review the application and also stated that the Commission should take more action in formulating a formal statement regarding this case. Chair Gonzalez asked Commissioner Morales if she could look into and review the application.

Commissioner Fuentes asked if the Commission is going to take a position.

Commissioner Scott mentioned that the research committee must contact ACLU regarding the case credence and the full file. Commissioner Scott stated that ACLU should be able to provide copies of the case's complete file.

Vice Chair Vega stated that the Commission must assign a timeline of the Commission's response regarding this lawsuit, due to College admission process & requirements which are met in the summer for Fall enrollment that will influence the students future.

2. Greenfield, IN incident regarding employee beating

Commissioner Morales made reference to two recent articles published in the *Daily Reporter*, "Immigrants face fears of attacks, deportation" (3/08/06) and "Employer faces civil rights complaint" (3/15/06). Commissioner Morales proceeded to summarize the same story contained in both articles where an illegal alien was beaten and summoned to ill treatment from the employer. Commissioner Morales stated that the illegal alien filed a complaint with the Indiana Civil Rights Commission and also mentioned that the Commission (ICHLA) should follow more cases such as this one. Commissioner Morales asserted that attorney John Broyles would be representing the plaintiff in this case against the Greenfield employer and Hancock County law

enforcement officials. Commissioner Morales stated that this example of an illegal alien fighting for his or her civil rights will set precedent in the State of Indiana for all undocumented individuals to report cases such as this one or any other to the Indiana Civil Rights Commission and other organizations.

Chair Gonzalez mentioned that the Commission should hold a public forum in Hancock County to implement cultural awareness.

Commissioner Morales stated that Hancock County citizens did not know that ICHLA existed nor the Mexican Consulate.

3. The Statewide Latino Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence – Discussion Postponed

IV. Old Business

A. Entérate Educational Program – Discussion Postponed

V. New Business

A. Election of 2006 Commission Chair

Director Mendoza stated that Commissioner Gonzalez was nominated as Commission Chair and asked for any other nominations. No other nominations were presented. Commissioner Gonzalez received 11 votes and was unanimously elected as Commission Chair.

Director Mendoza opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Chair Gonzalez nominated Commissioner Frances Vega. No other nominations were presented. Commissioner Vega received 10 votes and was elected as Commission Vice Chair.

B. Committee Assignment:

Business Committee:

Chair – Commissioner Cantu

Members - Commissioners Fuentes

Media Committee:

Chair – Commissioner Maldonado

Members – Commissioners Ruiz

Driver’s License/Immigration Committee:

Chair – Commissioner Morales

Members – Commissioners Scott

Chair Gonzalez suggested sending a letter of acknowledgment to Commissioner Morales's boss to inform him of the contributions she has made to the Commission's work in the past few months.

Education Committee:

Chair – Commissioner Vega

Members – Commissioners Vazquez and Solis

Health Committee:

Chair – Commissioner Quintana

Research Committee:

Chair – Commissioner Morales

Members – Commissioner Altman

Civil Rights and Housing Committee:

Chair – Commissioner Scott

Members – Proxy McCormack

Director Mendoza stressed to commissioners that participation on committees is required. She stated that if Commissioners do not volunteer to serve on committees, they will be appointed to one. She also stressed the fact that Committee Chairs will be responsible for appointing non-Commissioner committee members and delegating work to committee members.

C. Guest Discussions:

James Evans, program administrator for the Indiana Department of Revenue (IDOR), primarily focuses on translating income tax returns and other IDOR documents into Spanish. Mr. Evans stated that it is IDOR's goal to place bilingual people in their local offices around the state. Mr. Evans also mentioned that Debbie McFarland (IDOR) could help the Commission in finding translating companies to translate the Commission's Annual Report.

Chair Gonzalez recommended that the Commission should partner with IDOR in trying to access Indiana Hispanic/Latino revenue data in order to show the state the economic impact Hispanics/Latinos have in the state.

Brad Hoffman, Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, presented a synopsis of his position.

VI. Adjournment

Chair Gonzalez adjourned the Commission meeting at 12:00 P.M.