



**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 25, 2013
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 12
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne
Pedro Ledo, Jr., Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Chair)
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission (Treasurer)
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (TELEPHONE)
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Vice-Chair)
Jesusa Rivera, House Lay Member, South Bend (TELEPHONE)
Francisco Garcia, House Lay Member
Rep. Rebecca Kubacki (TELEPHONE)

Commissioners Not Present:

Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Seth Morales, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Gerardo Gonzalez, House Lay Member, Bloomington
Charlie Garcia, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Andrea Perez, Designee, Department of Health
Lenee Reedus, Designee, Dept of Education
Senator Frank Mrvan
Senator Greg Walker

Visitors:

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

Chairman Pedro Ledo, Jr. called the meeting to order noting the lack of quorum.

Approval of Minutes

Ledo noted that minutes could not be approved due to lack of quorum. Commissioners were asked if any suggested changes should be made to the minutes prior to approval at the August meeting, and no suggestions were made.

Approval of Financials

Executive Director Danny Lopez said that no unobligated expenses had been made during the previous month and that the only budgetary items were related to salaries, wages, and commissioner per diems. Two commissioners noted that they had per diem payments still pending, and Lopez said he would investigate with the agency's budget personnel to see if the issue could be identified.

Chairman's Report

Ledo discussed the conversation he had had with the superintendent of the Fort Wayne schools concerning the district's need to identify volunteers for interpretations for parent/teacher conferences. Volunteers would need to be screened and cleared by the district, and Lopez said he would inquire about the process. Ledo said he had a group of potential volunteers identified and would be willing to ask them to participate once Lopez provided the process details.

Lopez suggested that commissioners reach out to the school districts in their areas, as well, to see if the commission could assist in a similar fashion.

Ledo said that, in his experience, school districts in many instances do not ask for support in these types of initiatives. While not within the core mission of the commission, Ledo suggested that commissioners locally could play a valuable role individually in helping districts identify creative, community-based solutions to their biggest challenges.

Executive Director's Report

Lopez began by saying that he had met with leadership from both houses of the Assembly to discuss vacant and filled commissioner appointments, share the aims and objectives of the commission, and discuss the ICHLA-CEEP partnership and the results of the focus groups conducted over the winter.

Lopez then said he had been contacted by Chris Christensen of Indiana Legal Services, recently contracted to direct the Immigrant Law Center. Lopez said Christensen had shared information concerning the challenges faced by migrant workers throughout Indiana and suggested that perhaps the commission might be interested, at some point in the future, in assisting in the dissemination of information concerning worker protections.

Commissioner Jesusa Rivera said she works closely with this population currently and outlined for commissioners a number of the obstacles these families face. She said that the only effective way to provide information is to connect directly with the families themselves or work hand-in-hand with the churches and organizations most closely connected with them. She also noted that there are currently protections in federal law under the Department of Labor, though enforcement of those laws, in her opinion, is spotty.

Commissioner Virginia Hernandez noted that her agency, the State's Civil Rights Commission, can also provide employer protections in employment. However, migrant families and those impacted by these unfair practices would need to come forward to file claims with the ICRC, a challenge and something that rarely happens with this vulnerable population.

Lopez suggested that perhaps a simple information sheet might be constructed with some basic contact information and tips, and that could be distributed by Rivera as she continues her work with the community.

Old Business

Noting the absence of quorum, it was decided by commissioners present that a discussion about the upcoming fiscal year's budget and strategic plan would be tabled until the August meeting. Moreover, Ledo suggested that the August meeting be moved up one week to avoid the Labor Day holiday weekend and encourage better participation and attendance. He also asked that the meeting be moved to 1pm.

No objections were raised, and Lopez said he would send a reminder to commissioners about the change for the August meeting.

Adjournment

At 4:23pm, the meeting was adjourned.