

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Indiana Government Center South
Conference Room 12
1/31/07**

Commissioners Present:

Manuel Gonzalez - Senate Lay Member, Commission Chair
Frances Vega - Senate Lay Member, Commission Vice-Chair
Carolyn Requiz - Designee, Indiana Department of Health
Alfonso Vidal - Governor Appointee
Adolfo Solis - House Lay Member
Christine Cde Baca - Indiana Civil Rights Commission, Proxy
Angel Velez-Designee - Indiana Department of Correction
Rita Cano - House Lay Member
Dr. Mary Ilu Altman - Senate Lay Member
Juana Watson - Senate Lay Member
Marisa Aguilar - Designee, Indiana Department of Education
Josh Richardson - Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Proxy
Sid Norton - Designee, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Virgil Madden - Proxy for Lieutenant Governor

Staff:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director
Laura Barrett, Staff

I. Call to Order

Chair Gonzalez brought the Commission meeting to order.

A. Establish Quorum

A quorum of 14 commissioners was established later during the meeting.
Chair Gonzalez requested that all Commissioners provide a brief introduction of themselves.

II. Commission Business

A. Annual Report Update

Chair Gonzalez asked Director Mendoza to present the Annual Report Update.

Director Mendoza explained that the Commission Executive Committee and Staff has been meeting with State Legislators and Senators, establishing relationships and requesting more information while highlighting the Commission's 2004-2005 Report of Findings & Recommendations. The Committees have already formed their reports, as there will be four Committee reports distributed. Director Mendoza stated that there has not been much response from the Research Committee. Therefore, the Staff plans to re-send the Committee reports to the Research Committee once again for their review and approval. Director Mendoza explained that the staff needs to take their time in reviewing and completing these important reports. The reports should not be rushed, as there is editing needed. Director Mendoza mentioned that the Committee reports will be ready by the next Commission meeting for their review. She explained that there has excellent data compiled and included in the reports. Director Mendoza also plans to include an administrative report based on the Staff and Executive Director activities. These reports will be completed in time for the next Commission meeting.

Chair Gonzalez asked if anyone had any questions in regards to the Committee reports or their responsibilities as a Commissioner. He explained that the Committee reports will become more important. Chair Gonzalez also commented that Director Mendoza has been very assertive this past year in giving responsibilities and getting good feedback from agencies. He stated that the Department of Correction Commissioner Donahue was a prime example of providing the Commission with good feedback about the needs of Hispanics/Latinos.

Chair Gonzalez asked Vice Chair Vega to discuss the January 20, 2007 Retreat, as he was unable to attend.

B. Retreat Report / 2007 Legislative Review

Vice Chair Vega thanked those Commissioners who were in attendance for the most recent Commission Retreat. She mentioned that the Retreat speaker was dynamic and pulled everyone together to rationalize what is needed and expected from the role as a Commissioner. Vice Chair Vega also thanked Director Mendoza and her staff for their preparation with the Retreat.

Director Mendoza asked all Commissioners to provide insight about the Retreat and their expectations for the year 2007.

Commissioner Solis enjoyed how the speaker highlighted each Commissioner's goal and responsibility, as the Commission represents a strong, growing community that has too many challenges. Commissioner Solis reiterated how each Commissioner has the expertise for each area.

Vice Chair Vega said that she would like to see a follow up on the Retreat. She explained that it does not have to happen the day of the Retreat, rather a later date. She suggested that the Staff might include a packet of information that explains the Commission's mission, goal, bylaws, ethics training, Commissioner contact lists and what is required.

Director Mendoza plans to work on the restructured plan, however the Commissioners must first review the plan before it is voted on. She acknowledged that there was a lot of work that did come from suggestions and important materials. She plans to review the Commission's plan that was developed at the Retreat disseminate the information to all Commissioners within the near future. Director Mendoza also stated that the flow of Commissioners and the code for elections was also discussed at the Retreat. She reminded the Commission that there may be new appointments to the Commission from appointing authorities soon. The formation of a Legislative Committee was also discussed at the Retreat. This Committee would review the policies and pursue the necessary changes to the Commission's code, as they must be changed through legislation. Director Mendoza also acknowledged that she does meet with new Commissioners and provides them with the necessary materials such as the Commission's code. She reiterated how important it is to share relevant Commission information with all new Commissioners.

Commissioner Requiz agreed that the speaker was very effective. She expressed her concerns about the Commission. She said that many people tend to think that the Commission is the Governor's Commission. She said that the Commission has three tasks: Commissioners must know what each member needs to do in their positions, Commissioners need to work toward their tasks and define them and Commissioners should bring things to the table by attending Commission meetings. Commissioner Requiz said that Senator Wyss has a clear goal. The goal is to inform the government. She expressed that others must know what the Commission is

doing. She suggested that the Commission might want to set up a Committee to talk to these governmental individuals.

Chair Gonzalez advised Commissioners to review over the minutes from the previous Commission meeting, as the Commission has been very consistent in addressing the goals. The Commission must communicate them to the agency heads, the Speaker of the House, the Governor's Office and etc. entities.

Virgil Madden from the Office of the Lt. Governor introduced himself as the Special Assistant of Minority Affairs. He also introduced his colleague, Chris Crabtree, who is also a Policy Advisor for the Lt. Governor.

Chair Gonzalez thanked Virgil Madden and acknowledged how supportive he has become with the Commission.

Chair Gonzalez revisited Commissioner Requiz' earlier remarks and stated that he would like to make it known that the Commission has been doing just that (meeting with governmental entities). He felt that the best result was the dinner that was hosted with the Lt. Governor. The Commission has never before presented committee report updates to legislators in this fashion. Chair Gonzalez assured Commissioners that committee reports will become more and more important. Chair Gonzalez said that the Commission plans to host another year end report and dinner celebration. He would like to anticipate an even larger number of legislators in attendance for the 2007 dinner event. Chair Gonzalez also stated that Speaker Bauer is eager to read the Commission's report. Speaker Bauer had mentioned an increase in budget with the Department of Education for ESL assistance. Speaker Bauer explained how the Commission can insert some kind of language to insert a budget increase for ESL. Chair Gonzalez said that the Commission has been discussing this very issue within the last few years especially.

Director Mendoza stated that this budget increase discussion for ESL assistance just happened recently with Speaker Bauer, however the Department of Education has been very proactive over last few years.

Chair Gonzalez reassured the Commissioners how important it has been for the Commission to meet with committees and state agencies and receive feedback. All of this information has been successfully documented in the Commission's Annual Reports. Chair Gonzalez reiterated how the Governor appreciates metrics. Therefore, the Commission has asked Commissioner Norton to use his business expertise and background to outline the Commission's progress and future goals.

Director Mendoza explained how there has been good progress already, as the Commission continues to report on various issues of importance. She reminded the Commissioners that the Commission voted in favor of having the Chair and Executive Director meet with all state directors and legislators. Since the last Commission meeting, Director Mendoza has already met with at several legislators, including the appointing authorities. Director Mendoza explained how the Commission needs to think of new and creative ways to show the progress, as the work is being done.

Commissioner Requiz said that Commissioners need to know what the Executive Committee is doing. She asked that they include a packet that is written down to be clear.

Chair Gonzalez agreed with Commissioner Requiz' recommendation. He asked that all Commissioners read the minutes carefully, as they are excellent and always very detailed. He said, "Read and you will hear what we are doing."

Vice Chair Vega added that all of the Commissioners were made aware that the Commission will be presenting the report very soon. This will be clarified if the Commission decides to go with terms.

Commissioner Requiz asked that the Commission revise its policies. She would like to see this happen.

Director Mendoza explained how the Legislative Committee (suggested at the Retreat) will be very important in deciding new Commission policies/analysis. She encouraged Commissioners to officially form a Legislative Committee sometime soon. She recommended a presentation at the next Commission meeting. Director Mendoza also asked for the Commission to think about potential individuals with expertise to sit on this Committee. She asked recommended that the Commission might want to seek outside assistance such as a legal council.

Director Mendoza reiterated the excellent message portrayed by the Retreat's guest speaker. She explained how every board goes through stages, and the speaker emphasized everyone's strengths. The speaker reminded Commissioners that it's about "them, not you." This message was reinforced many times at the Retreat. Personal agendas were continually encouraged to be left behind. Director Mendoza said that it is okay for Commissioners to disagree and not take things personally.

Commissioner Cde Baca said that the speaker was dynamic, as he gave the commissioners something to take away to each others' respective jobs. The speaker studied everyone in the room and took something from that person in order to engage in a conversation with them. She explained that the speaker brought each commissioner to the moment and actually listened to what each other had to say. She said that commissioners need to come to the meetings and really listen to each other.

Director Mendoza outlined the committee goals and the way to tackle them through committee work. The commissioners discussed the ways of doing this and the frequency of meetings. The Commission must discuss when the Commissioners will meet, what time and how often. Director Mendoza mentioned that she felt that the Retreat was very positive.

Commissioner Aguilar asked if there will be a summary of the Retreat.

Director Mendoza assured the Commissioners that they will be receiving an outline of the Retreat soon.

Chair Gonzalez asked for further commentary on this discussion.

III. New Business

A. *Election of 2007 Commission Officers*

Chair Gonzalez moved the discussion to the election of Commission Officers. He announced his resignation effective immediately, as he has accepted other responsibilities with a new foundation. Chair Gonzalez said that he is willing to help with any future projects, funding and/or grant proposal requests.

Director Mendoza thanked Chair Gonzalez for his service and his tremendous help with the Commission and its Executive Committee.

Director Mendoza announced the commencement of elections. She explained that the Commission's code requires that elections be held at the first meeting of each year. She plans to describe the positions and what they entail.

Director Mendoza explained the duties of the Chair as the following: Preside at all meetings of the Commission (including keeping time during meetings and making sure they run on schedule), appoint committees and committee chairpersons, supervise meeting activities of the Commission, designate Commission meetings and assign topics of study for the Commission and/or subcommittees.

Director Mendoza said that the following Commissioners were nominated for the position of Commission Chair: Alfonso Vidal and Frances Vega. She stated that the floor was currently open for any other nominations for the position of Commission Chair. There were no additional nominations for the position of Commission Chair.

Director Mendoza asked for those in favor of Frances Vega for the position of Commission Chair to please raise all hands. Director Mendoza acknowledged 4 votes in favor of Frances Vega for the position of Commission Chair.

Director Mendoza asked for those in favor of Alfonso Vidal serving as the Commission Chair to please raise all hands. Director Mendoza acknowledged that there were 7 votes in favor of Alfonso Vidal for the position of Commission Chair.

Director Mendoza announced Alfonso Vidal as the new Commission Chair.

Director Mendoza and Chair Gonzalez congratulated Alfonso Vidal and moved onto the nomination of Vice Chair. She explained the duties of the Vice Chair. If the Chair is not present, the Vice Chair shall discharge all the usual functions of the Chair.

Director Mendoza stated that the following Commissioners have been nominated for the position as Commission Vice Chair: Frances Vega and Mary Ilu Altman. She asked for other nominations at this time. There were no additional nominations.

Director Mendoza asked for those in favor of Frances Vega serving as the Commission Vice Chair to please raise their hands. Frances Vega received 6 votes for the position of Commission Vice Chair.

Director Mendoza asked for those in favor of Mary Ilu Altman as the Commission Vice Chair to please raise their hands. Mary Ilu Altman received 5 votes for the position of Commission Vice Chair.

Director Mendoza announced Frances Vega as the new Commission Vice Chair.

Director Mendoza discussed the following as duties of Commission Secretary: Keep a record of all proceedings of the Commission and the Executive Committee meetings, perform duties as designated by the Chair and record all Commission and Executive Committee minutes. Director

Mendoza said that Christine Cde Baca was the only one nominated for the position as Commission Secretary. She opened the floor for additional nominations.

Director Mendoza acknowledged that Christine serves as proxy for Commissioner Scott, however last year, former Commission Chair, Aguilera, appointed her to serve as the Chair of the Education Committee. Director Mendoza plans to research this issue to make certain that Christine Cde Baca is permitted to serve on the Executive Committee as Commission Secretary. Director Mendoza said that the Commission will now move forward if there is not any objection.

Director Mendoza asked for those in favor of Christine Cde Baca serving as Commission Secretary to please raise all hands. Christine Cde Baca received a unanimous decision of 11 votes to serve as the Commission Secretary.

Director Mendoza read the following duties of Commission Treasurer: Chair the Commission's Budget Committee, work with the Department of Workforce Development to furnish the Commission with a record of all monetary transactions of the Commission's budget and record all donations and special gifts related to the Commission's special account for gifts and donations.

Director Mendoza said that she works with the Treasurer quite often, as this position will require specific expertise. Director Mendoza acknowledged that Carolin Requiz was the only nomination to serve in the position of Commission Treasurer. She opened the floor for additional nominations.

Director Mendoza asked for all those in favor for Carolin Requiz serving as Commission Treasurer to please signify their vote by raise of hand. Carolin Requiz received 9 votes.

Director Mendoza acknowledged Carolin Requiz as the new Commission Treasurer.

Director Mendoza confirmed all new Executive Committee members by reading the following names aloud: Alfonso Vida, Commission Chair; Frances Vega, Commission Vice Chair; Christine Cde Baca, Commission Secretary; Carolin Requiz, Commission Treasurer. Director Mendoza congratulated all new Executive Committee members.

Chair Gonzalez also congratulated all new Executive Committee members and acknowledged that 2007 is just getting started with the new leadership.

Chair Gonzalez moved the discussion onto calendar coordinations for 2007.

B. *Calendar Coordination for 2007*

Director Mendoza acknowledged previous discussions at the commission's retreat and meetings regarding the frequency of commission meetings. Some commissioners were in favor of meeting every month while others were in favor of meeting every other month. She recommended that the Commission vote on this idea today.

Chair Gonzalez asked for the opinion of the new Commission Chair.

Newly appointed Chairman, Alfonso Vidal said that the committees work will become more important as the Commission moves forward. The Commission should be a review over what committees are doing. He asked that the Commission leave more time for committee work, as the effort will always be there. Commissioner Vidal suggested that the Commission focus more on the committee level.

Director Mendoza discussed meeting every other month and having regional meetings for the Executive Committee in different parts of the state that are not required.

Chair Gonzalez said that he will honor Commissioner Vidal's recommendation, as the committee reports are important. Many commissioners do not serve on committees because the current frequency of commission meetings deter them from doing so. Chair Gonzalez asked that the Commission vote on this idea, and he acknowledged it as a good recommendation.

Director Mendoza suggested that the Commission vote on the frequency of Commission meetings.

Chair Gonzalez stated how there is a motion on the table to set the 2007 schedule as having 6 Commission meetings. This would allow the committee more ability to meet on a bimonthly basis. Chair Gonzalez asked for all those in favor to please raise their hand. The vote was unanimous consisting of 11 votes.

Director Mendoza asked when the Commission would like to meet with local officials, as the revised Retreat plan is not yet completed.

Commissioner Norton asked that the Committee meetings begin as early as February 2007.

Commissioner Vidal asked that the Committees wait for the Committee Chairs to be appointed once the new Commission member appointments have been completed.

Commissioner Solis asked about regional meetings and their frequency. He asked that the Commission vote on holding regional Executive meetings.

A motion was made by Commissioner Solis and seconded by Commissioner Vidal to hold regional meetings during off months of Commission meetings.

Director Mendoza asked for clarification of the subject and objectives of the regional meetings. She asked who will decide on what is discussed and who will be invited. Director Mendoza asked for direction and recommendations from the Commission.

Commissioner Vidal explained how the Commission needs to get closer to other regions throughout the State. He said that one part of the meeting should be listening to the concerns. This might be somewhat difficult since not everyone might understand what the Commission does as a whole.

Commissioner Solis reminded commissioners that communities face different challenges.

Chair Gonzalez said that some of the legislation recommended during this session appears very negative toward immigrants. He also mentioned how many legislators have heard their constituents saying, "They are speaking Spanish, therefore they must be illegal." Chair Gonzalez asked that the public forum meetings include local legislators as hosts. He recommended that the Commission be assertive in making sure that the elected officials are present, as this would be most effective. Chair Gonzalez stressed how the correct information should be shared with everyone, not simply the Latino population.

Commissioner Altman proposed that public forum meetings be optional for commissioners, as it is very difficult to attend in other regions.

Virgil Madden explained how the Commission can meet too much. The Commission needs to be cautious and plan accordingly so that the purpose of each meeting will be served. He said, "if only the Chairman and certain people show up...what is the message?" Virgil Madden suggested that the Commission reach out to others.

Commissioner Altman said that the Commission currently has an excellent model. She felt that it would be unfair to have all Commissioners attend if a forum was at 6:00pm. Commissioner Altman explained that there were two Commissioners present, including the Director at the 2005 Lafayette forum. She would like the freedom to choose what forums to attend. However, she encouraged Commissioners to attend if they can be there to invest in it.

Director Mendoza asked if the Commission would like to refer the forum details in terms of locations and invitations to a special Committee.

Commissioner Altman reiterated how important it is for everyone to come together at a meeting and share ideas.

Vice Chair Vega explained how there will only be 5 meetings. She encouraged Commissioners from the targeted regions to attend any forum meetings. Vice Chair Vega said, "We can have overkill at the same time." She would like to see both the Executive Director and the Executive Committee come together in regards to possible forum hosts, locations and agendas. Vice Chair Vega said that those Commissioners in the targeted regions need to be identified.

Chair Gonzalez agreed that the Executive Committee should decide on the final recommendations. The target audience must also be included.

Chair Gonzalez said that the motion is off the table. The Commission plans to go a different route.

Director Mendoza referred further discussion on forum meetings to the Executive Committee.

Chair Gonzalez stated that the legislative review is the last item on the agenda.

Chair Gonzalez also confirmed that the Commission plans to meet the last Wednesday of every other month. The details of these meetings will be referred to the Executive Committee. Chair Gonzalez acknowledged that the new Chair, Alfonso Vidal, has a great distance to travel from Evansville.

C. 2007 Legislative Review

Director Mendoza said that a lot of work has been done to monitor bills and legislation. She presented the three bills that she has recently reviewed which included House Bill No. 1129, House Bill No. 1253 and House Bill No. 1283.

Director Mendoza discussed how there is a lot of attention on the cigarette tax, full day kindergarten, eliminating sales tax on text books, aid for kids and etc.

Director Mendoza stated that House Bill No. 1129 deals with the open door law and might affect how the Commission meets. It has additional violations if a meeting occurs without a quorum. This bill has not been assigned to a Committee. She asked Commissioners to please review over this bill for their thoughts.

Director Mendoza commented on House Bill No. 1253 and how it deals with Social Security member violations for employers who hire individuals as undocumented workers. The status of this bill has been assigned to the Rules and Legislative Proceedings Committee.

Director Mendoza stated that House Bill No. 1283 involves restricting public assistance for illegal aliens. The Commission has been concerned about what the definition of an illegal alien entails and how the people appear to be. This bill is awaiting a hearing in the Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee.

Commissioner Watson mentioned how there are 4 other bills in the House and 3 in the Senate that are of interest to the Latino population. Representative Mike Murphy drafted a bill in regards to driver's licenses for temporary resident aliens. She said that he is working with her office to include an amendment. Commissioner Watson plans to send all Commissioners these four bills.

Director Mendoza said that the Commission already sent Representative Murphy the Driver's License report. He plans to make recommendations from the Commission's report.

Commissioner Watson explained how many individuals who are documented have husbands/wives that came along who cannot drive because they do not have a social security number. She said that bill 1523 will make it so international students can drive without a social security number. Commissioner Watson plans to send the drafted bill to all Commissioners.

Director Mendoza informed Commissioner Watson that Bill 1523 was the Commission's recommendation. She is pleased to see that this recommendation is moving along.

Commissioner Cde Baca said that House Bill 1194 concerns this Commission. It proposes that a Commission of Disproportionality in Youth Services be created. Commissioner Cde Baca acknowledged that if passed, this legislation will include an appointment from the Commission.

Director Mendoza explained how the previous session was very intense and included a lot of immigration-related legislation.

Chair Gonzalez asked for the audience members to introduce themselves. The following individuals were present:

Audience:

Ruby Fleming- Latino Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Diego Morales- Office of Rural Affairs

Morella Dominguez-Indiana Minority Health Coalition

Ivan Hernandez – Regional Comisión on Hispanic/Latino Affaire Lafayette, IN

Chris Crabtree - Office of Lt. Governor

Juan Gonzalez - Community Volunteer

IV. Adjournment

Chair Gonzalez adjourned the Commission meeting at approximately 11:09am.