

Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Indiana Department of Health
5/31/2006

Commissioners Present:

Manuel Gonzalez – Senate Lay Member, Commission Chair
Frances Vega – Senate Lay Member, Commission Vice Chair
Claudia Ontiveros-Fuentes – Designee, Indiana Economic Development Corporation,
Commission Treasurer
Judge Gregory Kellam Scott – Indian Civil Rights Commission Director
Christine Cde. Baca – Indiana Civil Rights Commission Deputy Director
Carmen Quintana – Designee, Dept. of Health
Samuel Ruiz – House Lay Member
Ronnie Cantu – Governor Appointee
Hilda Vasquez – Designee, Indiana Department of Education
Lawrence McCormack – Proxy Senator Vi Simpson
John Aguilera – State Representative
Randy Koester – Chief of Staff and Deputy Director, Department of Correction
Adolfo Solis – House Lay Member

Staff:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director
Laura Barrett, Staff
Ryan C. Marques, Staff

I. Call to Order

A. Establish Quorum

A quorum was established that consisted of 12 Commissioners.

Chair Gonzalez asked all visitors to give a brief introduction.

Those visitors present: Richard Espinoza, Ft. Wayne Newspaper; Francisco Garcia;
Sara Williams, Partnership Center (ESL Coordinator); Joy Melnick, Indiana Statewide
Hispanic/Latino Association; Steve Leek, BMV; Juan Gonzalez, community
organizer; Jorge Aguilera, Union organizer; Glenn Tabbey, Indiana Catholic
Conference

II. Guest Speaker

A. Mary Lee Comer & Mary Hill, Indiana Ethics Commission

Chair Gonzalez introduced guest speakers Mary Lee Comer and Mary Hill from the Indiana Ethics Commission.

Mary Lee Comer passed out a PowerPoint presentation to each commissioner entailing the Indiana State Ethics laws that pertain to special state appointees and state employees. Mary Lee Comer stated that special state appointees and state employees are under the discretion of the State Ethics Commission.

Mary Lee Comer began her PowerPoint presentation with the following subjects: Mandatory Training, Financial Interest and Gifts and Food. Mary Lee Comer stated that there is no rule that binds gift giving to an agency from a vendor. However, it is the agency's responsibility to write to vendors who are giving gifts that the agency cannot accept these gifts due to violation of state law.

Chair Gonzalez provided an example in his own case if he were to give a homemade present to a commissioner of an agency: Would he be in violation?

Mary Lee Comer answered yes. Chair Gonzalez would be in violation. She then stated that if you or your business has a business relationship with an Indiana state agency or commission, then one cannot give gifts nor accept them. However, Mary Lee Comer expressed that one can accept a gift from a brother or close friend who is a state employee, but the donor cannot write this gift as a business expense.

Mary Lee Comer clearly expressed that the Indiana State Ethics Commission does not make decisions, but only files claims.

Mary Lee Comer continued with her presentation covering the following subjects: Exceptions to Gift Giving, Agency Approval-Waiver and Political Activity.

The question was raised to see if the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs is a procurement board or an advisory board. Mary Lee Comer stated that if this board has procurement authority, commissioners cannot ask nor solicit for political contributions. In addition, if the Commission is a procurement board, then many of the Ethics exemptions that apply to an advisory board are not valid for current or prospective commissioners.

Chair Gonzalez stated that it will be hard to construct a commission, such as the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, with quality volunteers if these elaborate rules play into the daily lives of prospective commissioners.

Mary Lee Comer stated that there are exemptions to some rules if this board is an advisory board.

Mary Lee Comer stated that the Indiana Ethics Commission does not have clarity regarding if the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs is a procurement board or an advisory board.

Director Mendoza stated that she will consult with DWD to review the Commission's code in order to clarify if the Commission is a procurement or advisory board.

Mary Lee Comer continued with her presentation covering the following subjects: Prohibitions, Moonlighting, Proof of No Violation, Conflicts of Financial Interest, Screening Procedure, Contracts and Post-Employment Restriction.

Mary Lee Comer concluded her presentation with the following subjects: Sanctions by the Ethics Commission, Retaliation, Consequences and Whistleblower's Law.

Commissioner Scott asked if there are regulations that guide the process of the investigation when retaliation has been made against a whistleblower.

Mary Lee Comer stated that there are no regulations, but expressed that if there was a violation then there would be a sanction; the Ethics Commission would then follow the normal process whether it is a retaliation complaint or a similar case.

Chair Gonzalez stated that he would like a follow up meeting with the Indiana State Ethics Commission involving other commissioners to be present at the meeting. Chair Gonzalez expressed that he would like to further his understanding of the rules and regulations of the Indiana State Ethics Commission and how they pertain to the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs.

Commissioner Fuentes asked the turnaround time for a ruling from the Indiana State Ethics Commission.

Mary Lee Comer responded by stating that informal advisory opinions usually take a week and the Indiana State Ethics Commission meets every second Thursday of each month.

Commissioner Scott made an acknowledgment to the response time that he has received from the Indiana State Ethics Commission regarding the Indiana Civil Rights Commission matters.

Mary Lee Comer stated that every commissioner has received their proper Ethics training and a certificate will be on file for every commissioner in the office of the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs.

III. Commission Business

A. Adoption of Minutes

Chair Gonzalez asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the April 26, 2006 Commission Meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cantu and seconded by Commissioner Ruiz to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2006 Commission Meeting. Motion carried by all in attendance.

B. 2006 Statewide Conference – Report on Progress

Director Mendoza stated that she has already sent out invitations to those who would like to support the conference and create sponsorships and partnerships in collaboration with the Commission regarding the conference task force meeting to be held on June 5th, 2006. Director Mendoza stated that the Commission will be sending out confirmations to those who have responded.

Chair Gonzalez expressed that the Commission would like to open up the conference to include as many organizations as possible and to design a theme that would attract other cities, states and government entities to the conference.

Director Mendoza stated that the Commission has yet to set a specific date for the conference.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Education Committee

Commissioner Cde. Baca stated that the Education Committee has already had a meeting which was comprised of new committee members and education leaders throughout the state. Commissioner Cde. Baca also mentioned that these committee members have already received assignments from Commissioner Cde. Baca and that the first meeting was a success.

1. Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs staff member, Ryan Marques, presented his findings on Indiana Public Colleges and Universities 2003-2004 Hispanic/Latino Top Ten Majors/Areas of Studies. Ryan Marques explained that the goal of this project will be to target those majors which most interest the Hispanic/Latino student body, and then educate them on the guidelines and procedures into transitioning into those professional occupations that correspond to a given major/area of study after graduation with the guidance from the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

Chair Gonzalez suggested that the Education Committee create a report that will supplement this data with the addition of addressing the Hispanic/Latino dropout rate in Indiana public colleges and universities.

B. Health Committee

Carolin Requiz, Health Committee Chair, presented the information from the Health Committee meeting on May 18, 2006. Carolin Requiz expressed that she handed out a form that every health committee member will fill out regarding their area of expertise. Carolin Requiz then stated that once this information is collected, she will be able to hand out assignments to each health committee member with accordance to

each individual's area of expertise. Carolin Requiz expressed that the first step will be to collect information regarding the health status of Indiana's Hispanics/Latinos. Chair Gonzalez posed a question regarding the health of Indiana's Hispanics/Latinos who are in correctional facilities.

Mr. Coester stated that the main problem that Hispanics/Latinos face when health problems occur while in correctional facilities is the lack of communication between the doctors and the patients.

Chair Gonzalez asked Mr. Coester if there are any bi-lingual doctors at Indiana Correctional Facilities.

Mr. Coester stated that there are no bi-lingual doctors available.

V. Executive Director and Chair Report

A. Commission Report & Strategic Plan

Director Mendoza made reference to the blue sheet in the commissioner's packet which entailed last month's 18 meetings with various state agency leaders and commissioners, conference planning items, administration notes, press conference updates and future conferences that commissioners will be attending.

Director Mendoza stated that she will be creating a monthly report, such as the one presented in the packet, for every commission meeting which will entail what the Executive Director and staff have accomplished.

Director Mendoza made reference to the summary of each meeting which was included in the commissioner packet. Director Mendoza stated that these meetings were successful in many ways through educating each state agency about the Commission's duties and obligations and also touching upon the Commission's report and recommendations.

Director Mendoza stated that she would brief the Commission on the most important meetings.

Director Mendoza first described the meeting with the Indiana Housing Authority and explained how the Wisconsin Immigrant Lending Program idea was conveyed to the Indiana Housing Authority.

Director Mendoza then explained the meeting with the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency in regards to the Top Ten Majors/Areas of Study report in order to place more Latinos in professional occupations.

Director Mendoza then stated that one of the most beneficial meetings occurred with the Lt. Governor. Director Mendoza stated that the Lt. Governor read the report and expressed that she was impressed with the report and with the Commission's activities in the past year such as the Commission's 5th annual conference, public

forums and the research which has been completed by the Commission. Director Mendoza expressed that the Lt. Governor asked her what are the 3 most important issues affecting the Hispanic/Latino community. Director Mendoza also mentioned that the Lt. Governor will support the Commission in any way possible.

Director Mendoza stated that the meeting with the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation was very successful in trying to promote a joint study between this agency and the Commission in trying to find ways to stop or prevent Indiana Hispanic/Latino smoking habits.

Director Mendoza expressed that the meeting with Sec. of State Todd Rokita was very successful due to the issues that were discussed such as the new Voter ID Act, Notaries Public, UCC and how he would like the Commission's feedback on what Sec. of State documents should be translated for the good of the Hispanic/Latino community.

Director Mendoza mentioned that another effective meeting took place with the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment. Director Mendoza stated that they offered the Commission research resources and are looking to partner with the Commission in possible joint studies.

Director Mendoza expressed that the meeting with the Indiana Department of Correction was very beneficial. Director Mendoza stated that Commissioner Donahue was very grateful of the Commission's research and statistics and expressed to both Director Mendoza and Chair Gonzalez his department's initiatives regarding re-entry programs for Latinos. Director Mendoza also stated that Commissioner Donahue had offered to host a Commission meeting at one of Indiana's correctional facilities.

Director Mendoza stated that the meeting with the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor was very effective due to the partnership that was created and the effort to promote better Latino consumer awareness.

Director Mendoza expressed that she met with the Indiana Department of Labor Commissioner Miguel Rivera. Director Mendoza stated that this meeting was very insightful due to the topics discussed such as child labor, migrant populations and possibly performing joint studies.

Director Mendoza stated that the meeting with Auditor Connie Nass was the only ineffective meeting.

Director Mendoza explained that the meeting with the Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor on Latino Affairs, Juana Watson, was conducted in a way that would address the letter that was voted and drafted by the Commission determining Juana Watson's job description and role with the Commission. Director Mendoza stated that Juana Watson will be hosting an Economic Development Conference this year

and looks to host a Latino Expo in the next few years. Director Mendoza also expressed that Juana Watson would like to combine the Economic Development Conference with the Commission's conference this year.

Director Mendoza mentioned that the meeting with the Executive Director of the Office of Rural and Community Development, David Terrell, was very productive and insightful. Director Mendoza stated that David Terrell will be looking to hire a Latino outreach director for his office and once that person is hired, the Commission will look to work closely with him or her. In addition, Director Mendoza stated that the Commission and David Terrell's office will be conducting surveys in the near future regarding the health and vibrancy of Indiana's rural communities.

Chair Gonzalez asked Director Mendoza if the meeting with Juana Watson was productive in a way which Juana Watson would work in a collaborative effort with the Commission regarding the conference in the fall.

Director Mendoza stated that Juana Watson would like to combine her conference with the Commission's conference.

Chair Gonzalez expressed that it is important that Juana Watson and the conference steering committee are all on the same page regarding planning, organizing and setting a date for the conference.

Commissioner Scott asked Director Mendoza if she could explain why Auditor Connie Nass believed that the Commission's recommendations were shallow.

Director Mendoza answered Commissioner Scott by stating that she tried to educate and explain to Auditor Nass that those recommendations were developed by research, public testimony and valued opinions by Indiana's leaders in education, business, health and civil rights.

Chair Gonzalez asked Director Mendoza if Auditor Connie Nass was annoyed that the Commission was taking her time away due to the meeting.

Commissioner Ontiveros-Fuentes stated that she felt that Auditor Connie Nass was offended due to Director Mendoza's, Commissioner Ontiveros-Fuentes' and Staff Ryan Marques' age.

Commissioner Aguilera stated that Auditor Connie Nass obviously has her position on the Latino community and it will not change.

Director Mendoza referred to the notes taken from the meeting with Auditor Connie Nass regarding how Latino gangs are destroying Indiana's communities, such as Dubois County. In addition, Director Mendoza stated that Auditor Connie Nass expressed that the Commission should be more diverse regarding commissioner members.

Commissioner Aguilera stated that this is an example of what we are dealing with when we are trying to fight for the right of this commission and our community. Commissioner Aguilera stated that these same comments from Auditor Connie Nass are not new to him.

Chair Gonzalez stated that he had met with two of the Governor's advisors to meet specifically with these individuals to inform them that this commission is indeed a working commission and how this commission has met with every state agency and department in order to form partnerships in how we can help each other and leverage the commission. Chair Gonzalez also stated that he showed both of the Governor's advisors the Lt. Governor's highly rated report card of the commission.

Chair Gonzalez stated that we must continue to do what we are doing now in order to stay connected with the community, local and state government.

Vice Chair Vega stated that it would be wise to place Auditor Connie Nass on one of the Commission's committees in order to learn and become an active participant in empowering the Latino community.

Director Mendoza referred to the blue sheet again and described the topics listed: Conference Planning, Administration, Press Conference and For the Good of the Order.

Director Mendoza stated that we are hoping to receive a budget report from DWD by the end of June.

Director Mendoza expressed the details of the press conference that would take place at 1:00 p.m.

VI. Old Business

A. Latino Coalition Against Domestic Violence Proposal

Director Mendoza referred to the packet which entailed the proposal of the conference that this organization will be planning on hosting. Director Mendoza stated that Gloria King and Marlene Dotson presented this proposal before the commission last month.

Chair Gonzalez asked Director Mendoza if both Gloria King and Marlene Dotson are both invited to the Commission's Conference Task Force Commission on June 5, 2006.

Director Mendoza stated both are invited. Director Mendoza asked if the Commission would be willing to allocate any funds for this organization's conference.

Chair Gonzalez stated that it was his understanding that we would have the Commission's Conference Task Force Meeting and from there, we would be able to determine the global budget. In addition, Chair Gonzalez stated that it is important to include as many groups possible into the sponsoring of our conference in order to maximize funding outside of the commission.

Chair Gonzalez stated that he is looking for input from the table and stated that the Commission's conference could be two days.

Director Mendoza stated that Marlene Dotson and Gloria King do not want to have a workshop or be part of a bigger conference. Director Mendoza explained that both Marlene Dotson and Gloria King want to have their own conference.

Chair Gonzalez stated that both Marlene Dotson and Gloria King can decide if they would like to be part of our conference or not.

Chair Gonzalez asked the Commission if it is possible to vote on this matter during the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Aguilera motioned Chair Gonzalez's proposal.

Vice Chair Vega seconded the motion.

The motion was accepted by all present.

B. Entérate Education Program Proposal

Chair Gonzalez introduced the proposal from Univision.

Director Mendoza referred to the letter that she had sent to Marco Dominguez regarding what specifically his organization would need from the Commission.

Director Mendoza stated that Marco would like the Commission to be the sole sponsor of the DWD disc program.

Director Mendoza stated that the total amount of sponsorship with this proposal was around \$86,000.

Proxy Lawrence McCormack asked if the \$86,000 was the entire cost.

Director Mendoza stated that the letter indicates to her that Univision is still looking for other sponsors.

Vice Chair Vega asked if Univision would be willing to do co-sponsorships with others.

Commissioner Quintana stated that it would be worthwhile to have a program such as this.

Chair Gonzalez stated that the Commission is at a disadvantage due to Indiana Department of Workforce Development's inability to produce an up to date and current budget for the Commission.

Chair Gonzalez stated that he would like to meet with Commissioner Ron Stiver to address this issue. Chair Gonzalez stated that we need to look at two things: The Commission's current budget situation and communicate with Marco how he is going to fund his project without the sole sponsorship of the Commission.

Commissioner Cantu stated that the Commission could help Marco acquire sponsors or write a letter of support to potential sponsors.

Commissioner Solis stated that he could pass along information such as Marco's to his community and others throughout the state.

C. Audience Introduction

Richard Espinoza – Fort Wayne Newspaper: Main objective is to acquire more information concerning Indiana Latinos and create more outreach with the Ft. Wayne area.

Francisco Garcia: Friend of Juan Gonzalez

Sara Williams – Indiana Partnership Center: Main objective is to create an institute where Latino parents will be educated in ways to be leaders in both the home and school. The Indiana Partnership Center will be hosting an event in late July 2006 named Latino Parent Gathering where it will be an interactive event where Latino parents can learn about their rights. In addition, the Indiana Partnership Center will be creating a Parent Academy for the next four years which one of the goals is to bring in more Latino parents.

Joy Melnick – Boyes Tracy Law Firm & Indiana Statewide Latino/Hispanic Association: Joy Melnick stated that there will be 20 task force meetings across the state of Indiana regarding this organization. Joy Melnick also stated that they will be a lobbying group for the Latino community that will tackle 2007 legislative issues concerning driver's license and medical care. Joy Melnick expressed that she is very interested in the Commission's conference and mentioned that her organization has a webpage: www.ishlaonline.org.

Chair Gonzalez asked if Joy Melnick would be attending the Commission's Conference Task Force meeting on June 5, 2006. In addition, Chair Gonzalez stated that there are some legislative issues that the Commission would like to see pass through next year's 2007 legislative session, therefore, we hope to work

closely with you in order to accomplish this task since the Commission is not a lobbying body.

Joy Melnick stated that she would be in attendance and there should be no problem in accomplishing this task. Joy Melnick also mentioned that this organization has already created a taskforce and that their lobbying organization is bi-partisan and looks forward to working with the Commission.

Steve Leek – Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Juan Gonzalez – Community Organizer/Advocate: Juan Gonzalez stated that he wants everyone in the Latino community to work together in order to better the Latino community. Juan Gonzalez also mentioned the problems that Latinos face with driver's licenses and many other issues.

Jorge Aguilera – Union Organizer and Coordinator for Justice for Immigrants: Jorge Aguilera stated that he is glad to see that this Commission is working very hard for the betterment of the Latino community.

Glenn Tabbey – Indiana Catholic Conference

Director Mendoza asked each Commissioner to sign the pink sheet regarding the completion of the Ethics Training.

VII. Adjournment

The Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:17 p.m.

