



**STATE OF INDIANA**

INDIANA COMMISSION ON  
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS  
Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor

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**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs  
Commission Meeting Minutes  
Monday, April 28, 2011  
3:00pm – 4:30pm  
Conference Center Room 18  
Indiana Government Center South  
Indianapolis, IN**

**Commissioners Present:**

Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)  
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)  
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis  
Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend  
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission  
Pedro Ledo, Senate Lay Member, Ft. Wayne  
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)  
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction

**Commissioners Not Present:**

Shanida Sharp-Byrnes, Designee, Dept of Education  
Ralph Flores, House Lay Member, Munster  
Michelle Stein-Ordóñez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration  
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon  
Pat Rios, House Lay Member, Indianapolis  
Rep. Rich McClain  
Senator Greg Walker  
Lisa Kusiak, House Lay Member, Munster  
Senator Frank Mrvan

**Visitors:**

Mary Gardner, Indiana Department of Education  
Angela Martinez-Mier, IU School of Dentistry  
Pam Shaw, IU School of Dentistry

**Staff Present:**

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

## **Opening**

Vice-Chairman Richard Espinosa called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m., as Chairman Christian Gallo was running late and would be arriving shortly.

He noted the lack of quorum, and asked Executive Director Danny Lopez whether any guests were in attendance. Lopez said that Angeles Martinez-Mier from the Indiana University School of Dentistry was in attendance and asked her to introduce herself to the commissioners.

## **Approval of Minutes**

With no quorum, the minutes from previous meetings could not be approved.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Lopez said that this month the commission was able to reach some of the areas of the state not normally visited. In Terre Haute, he said, he had done some radio and television and that much of the commission's travel had been tied with Civil Rights Commission activities. Lopez said that while in Terre Haute he had met with the president of the local Chamber of Commerce about some education initiatives on which collaborations might be facilitated in the future. Lopez also said that in contrast to more rooted Latino areas, places like Terre Haute, Logansport, and other more rural areas do not currently have appropriate services available to them. As a result, it is important that the commission reach out to these areas to see how partnerships can be formed.

Lopez said that he had had a meeting with KnowledgeWorks, a national education think tank in Cincinnati that is looking at helping school districts capitalize on potential economies of scale across Ohio and the country. Conversations have been ongoing about the applicability to Indiana at large and underserved populations specifically.

Lopez said he had welcomed Mexican exchange students at Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis as part of their international program. Commissioner Freddie Thon mentioned that the Rotary Club of South Bend has existing Sister Cities programs with Mexican cities to facilitate exchanges, as well.

Finally, Lopez spoke about his meetings with Gilberto Perez, director of the Bienvenidos program in Goshen and member of the ICHLA Health Subcommittee. He said that there were ongoing talks about potentially partnering in the future, and subsequent details would be provided. Thon then said that as a member of the Hispanic Leadership Coalition of South Bend he would keep commissioners apprised of future potential opportunities for projects through that organization.

Treasurer Herb Hernandez asked Lopez about the topics discussed at radio interviews in Gary that had taken place. Lopez said that the focuses were education and building capacity for filling community-centric gaps in the education system. Hernandez then asked about how cuts to statewide education would impact Latino children, and Lopez said that he would work with Shanida on a breakdown of all education-focused bills that were passed.

## **Approval of Financials**

Hernandez said that per his calculations, roughly \$38,000 remain to be allocated for the remainder of the fiscal year and expressed his concern that the monies would need to be distributed to projects of value. He mentioned that projects presented by Lopez in the current strategic plan were potentially impactful and hoped that it could be discussed, despite the lack of quorum.

Thon suggested that teleconference be used to establish quorum in the event that the May meeting was anticipated to lack it. Hernandez said that he felt code would not permit it.

Espinosa said that delaying the discussion and approval process due to lack of quorum was extremely problematic. Thon asked the last time that the commission had a quorum. Espinosa said January.

Hernandez said that the micro-financing plan in Fort Wayne was operating well. Lopez reminded commissioners that Hernandez sits on the loan allocation board for that project and that six micro-finance loans tied directly to commission funding have already been allocated. The goal would be to replicate in Logansport.

Lopez suggested that the best way to evaluate the draft strategic plan would be to identify problems that commissioners would object to.

## **Chairman's Report**

Gallo said that there had been several clear instances of civil rights violations in Tippecanoe County in the month of March, including people being pulled over or being held by police without cause. Prosecutors had generally refused to press charges due to lack of information or evidence, and the individuals had been released. Still, he said, there is confusion in Tippecanoe concerning rights and responsibilities of both law enforcement and lay individuals.

Gallo also stressed the importance of attending monthly meetings of the commission and asked that commissioners make a more concerted effort to attend.

## **Unfinished Business**

The commission discussed pending projects under consideration. Thon raised concerns over the partnership with Key Bank. The concern stemmed from the fact that Key would benefit directly in recruitment from the investment made by the commission. Lopez said that he recognized and stated to the Key Bank representatives that commissioners would have issues with sponsoring one particular bank. Hernandez said that he agreed that it could represent a conflict but that partnering with a specific bank on an existing program would be easier and simpler than the commission having to create its own module.

Commissioner Pedro Ledo said that the project was worthy of further consideration. Hernandez then said that as part of the Memorandum of Understanding to be developed, the Bank could be made to forego any solicitation or recruitment activities as part of the initiatives. Lopez said that

this would be made clear to them, but that their signage would still be visible and thus used as an inherent recruitment tool. Ledo then asked about how many people would be reached. Lopez said he would get an estimate. Thon said that Key should be granting the commission funds for the work, as opposed to the commission investing its own dollars.

Commissioner Tina Little asked about approaching the statewide bankers organization, and Lopez said that this would not be a problem but that the challenge would then be building a module from scratch. Gallo agreed with Thon that, in general this type of partnership with one specific bank would be more problematic than helpful. He said that the bank would need commission expertise, rather than money. He also said he had a friend at Key Bank who could help with the efforts.

Hernandez said that financial literacy was critical and should be a point of focus for the commission but that selecting one bank would be problematic. He then pointed out that one event – a luncheon - that he had attended was put together by a specific bank but no solicitations had been made. Lopez said that the problem with these types of events is that the same people, the self-designated community leaders, would show up, but not the people truly needing the information. He also said that Key Bank would also benefit little in the short term, other than community relations.

Hernandez then brought up the English Language Learners partnership program with IU Southeast in New Albany aimed at reaching linguistically-isolated families in southern Indiana. Lopez said that commissioners would be responsible for collaborating on a workshop as well as the development of PSAs aimed at engaging and informing local Latinos. Thon expressed his interest that this be used as a model but be continued to other parts of the state. Commissioners thought more should be allocated for that project.

The next item, the Strategy Summit, would need to be taken into the coming fiscal year, due to planning requirements. Lopez said that the event would need to be expanded in scope but that all participants seemed engaged and enthusiastic. Thon said that before moving to another Summit, the commission should be looking at exploring what was discussed at the last Summit. The focus, he said, should be on following up on the ideas that were discussed previously.

Finally, the Parents As Teachers of Northwest Indiana initiative was discussed. Hernandez asked Mary Gardner of the Department of Education to speak on the subject of ELL. She said that many teachers not accustomed to working with this population label these students erroneously. Espinosa said that this is more prevalent with merit calculations. Lopez said that the key was to find a partner who has sufficient reach and experience, and Lake County's program is the largest in the state. Lopez said that the commission would need to play an active role, and Commissioner Ralph Flores would be able to help steer the project. Hernandez said a similar program in Ft. Wayne would be ideal in the future, as well, but he said that he understands the need for this type of work in Lake County and was enthusiastically in support. Thon expressed his support, as well.

### **Business Subcommittee report**

No report.

### **Civil Rights Subcommittee report**

Gallo said that multiple counties had seen an uptick in complaints from local Hispanics who were saying that they were arrested for having a consular ID. Lopez said that Gallo should recommend to these individuals that they contact the State Civil Rights Commission directly for help. Gallo said he did not want to provide too many details right now because the allegations had not been verified. Commissioner Virginia Hernandez said that officers frequently ask for identification and do not recognize consular ID in many counties. Lopez then provided the phone number for the State Civil Rights office.

### **Education Subcommittee report**

Commissioner Shanida Sharp-Byrnes was absent and no report was given. Lopez reminded commissioners to provide input as to members of their communities who can round out the subcommittees.

### **Health Subcommittee report**

No report.

### **Guest Presentation**

Martinez-Mier said that she had two initiatives to present to commissioners. The first dealt with IUPUI's Signature Center initiative, essentially research centers that bring distinction to the campus. The BiNational Cross Cultural Enhancement Center is looking for funding to help mentors and students partner on research projects related to migration and immigration, mostly focused on the movements between Mexico and Indiana. Many of the projects deal with nutrition because it is impacted during migration and has ramifications for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, etc.

Martinez-Miel suggested that one of the projects this year could be an evaluation of diabetes evaluation, in line with the goals of the commission. Commissioners could serve as part of the peer review committee. She said that they bring the peer review, the structure, and the expertise. Commission would bring funding and the idea for evaluation need. Lopez said that evaluating the DEEP program was a critical focus for the commission and perhaps could be a point of collaboration between the two organizations. Thon said that the access to information would be critical in helping providers give service to Latinos across the state.

Pam Shaw, the Associate Dean for Equity and Inclusion for the IU School of Dentistry, approached the commission about a potential partnership on a mentorship program. She said her primary concern is that many Latino students in high school do not have an understanding of what certain feels entail. By constructing a high school summer mentorship program through

which students earn practicum hours and visit dental schools to develop that sense of awareness, numbers of enrollees would increase. Lopez said that the commission had looked for opportunities to partner on mentorship programs but had not found a suitable collaborator. Lopez said that he would help Shaw reach out to existing health groups and would explore ways to construct a potential partnership for the coming fiscal year.

### **Adjournment**

At 4:37 p.m., the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.