

MINUTES

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LATIN AMERICAN AND HISPANIC AFFAIRS

Monday, April 30, 2007 – 2:00 P.M.

Jim Thorpe Building – Conference Room G-91
2101 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Advance written notice of regular scheduled meetings was filed with the Secretary of State on December 11, 2006. The agenda for this meeting was posted with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This meeting was conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meeting Act, Section 301 through 314 of Title 25.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Giovanni Perry, Vice-Chair
Yolanda Charney
Dr. Eloy Chavez
Nancy Galvan
Sebastian Lantos
Louis Maltos
Teri Mora
Guillermo Rojas
Arthur Valdez
Juanita Vasquez-Sykes

MEMBERS ABSENT

Steven Valencia

OPM STAFF PRESENT

Brenda C. Thornton
Linda Williamson

VISITORS PRESENT

Judy Gibbs Robinson – Reporter, The Oklahoman
Almadelia Barriga – Student, Oklahoma Panhandle State University
Rony Medrano – Telemundo

A. CALL TO ORDER.

Giovanni Perry, Vice-Chair of the Governor's Advisory Council on Latin American and Hispanic Affairs, called the meeting to order at 2:21 p.m.

B. COUNCIL MEMBERS, STAFF AND SPECIAL GUESTS.

Vice-Chair Perry asked council members, staff and guests to provide self-introductions. She welcomed everyone; thanked each for attending; and gave a special introduction and welcome to the council's newest member, Louis Maltos, who was attending his first meeting since his recent appointment to the council.

C. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 29, 2007, MEETING.

Arthur Valdez made a motion to approve the minutes for January 29, 2007, as presented; seconded by Nancy Galvan. The motion carried unanimously.

D. REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING COUNCIL.

Governor Brad Henry issued Executive Order 2007-12, which continues the council as created by Executive Order 96-26 signed by then Governor Frank Keating. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) forwarded to the Office of Governor Brad Henry the council's recommendation that the language of their Executive Order be changed to allow the council members to elect their chairperson. The Governor's Office asked that the council give them until the next council meeting to provide an answer. Vice-Chair Perry suggested that each council member review the executive order and take advantage of this opportunity to make recommendations for additional changes in the organization of the council.

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS.

Legislative Committee Report: Yolanda Charney, Committee Chair, reported that HB-1804 had received legislative support. This bill has been passed by the Senate and, if approved by the House, would then go to Governor Henry. If this bill is approved and signed by the Governor, she feels that this would change the atmosphere in Oklahoma to an unfavorable one for the Hispanic and other ethnic communities. She further stated that she felt it would be an inefficient and costly mandate for the state.

Ms. Charney also provided information and an update on SB-820. This bill originally was the reauthorization of the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP), which contained provisions for underprivileged students to receive assistance and allow residents to pay in-state tuition. She feels that if this bill passes, scholarships and grants would no longer be available after November 1st. She stated that the good news is that the in-state tuition and some health care provisions were still retained in the bill.

Ms. Charney noted that The Oklahoman and the Tulsa World have done excellent jobs in keeping the community informed on these and other issues affecting the Hispanic community. One example of positive press was the Tulsa World's recent front-page documentary on the Hispanic influences and contributions that transformed the City of Guymon.

Several council members commented that they had been working diligently to campaign and educate the legislators about the negative effect of the current legislation on the Hispanic community.

Guillermo Rojas made a motion that the council write a letter to Governor Henry recommending that the Governor not sign HB-1804 but instead veto it in its entirety; seconded by Ms. Galvan. Motion carried unanimously. It was agreed that Ms. Charney and Vice-Chair Perry compose the letter, Sebastian Lantos provide input regarding the line item veto recommendations, and Linda Williamson put the final copy on council letterhead and forward it to Governor Henry.

Ms. Charney made a motion that the council send letters to the Oklahoma Congressional delegation asking them to co-sponsor the STRIVE Act of 2007; seconded by Juanita Vasquez-Sykes. Motion carried unanimously. It was agreed that Teri Mora and Dr. Eloy Chavez compose the letter through Vice-Chair Perry, and Linda Williamson put the final copy on council letterhead and send it out by May 13, 2007. It was also agreed that all members be listed on the letter.

Legal Translation and Interpretation: Mr. Lantos, Committee Chair, expressed his concern that Oklahoma does not have a certifying body in place to certify qualified interpreters. He stated that there are private companies certifying interpreters but feels they are not requiring candidates to exhibit the level of competency (that would be required if) there was a state certifying body. Mr. Lantos, a member of both the Oklahoma Board of Courtroom Interpreters and the Translators and Interpreters Association of Oklahoma, asked for the support of the council to see that something is enacted as soon as possible so that the State of Oklahoma has certified interpreters available to provide services to the medical, law enforcement and judicial systems. Mr. Lantos made a motion that the council send a letter to the Supreme Court of Oklahoma and the State Board of Certified Courtroom Interpreters, with a copy to the Oklahoma Bar Association and the Hispanic Bar Network, asking them to accelerate the implementation of a state body that would test and certify candidates as state certified interpreters; seconded by Dr. Chavez. Motion carried unanimously. It was agreed that Mr. Lantos and Dr. Chavez compose the letter; and Vice-Chair Perry edit, approve and forward it along with specific delivery instructions to Linda Williamson who will put the final copy on council letterhead.

Driver License: Ms. Galvan, Committee Chair, reported that she has all the documentation she compiled when she met with state officials in an attempt to get an administrative decision that would allow undocumented residents to make application for a driver license. This item was tabled because of the current anti-immigration legislation.

Summit Committee: Mr. Valdez, Committee Chair, continues to recommend that the council wait until 2008 to have their next Summit. He reported that the steering committee will be meeting soon to start working on the 2008 Summit. He will notify council members of the meeting details and provide a report at the next council meeting.

F. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.

This item was covered in the Legislative Committee report.

G. IMMIGRATION ISSUES.

This item was covered in the Legislative Committee report.

H. YWCA'S EXHIBIT AT THE CAPITOL – "JOURNEY TO AMERICA".

Ms. Charney reported that the Tulsa YWCA has a wonderful project called "Journey to American" that is touring the state. She felt that it was a beautiful story about immigrants. The State Arts Council has agreed to bring this exhibit to the state capitol sometime in 2008 and would like to have the official pledge of support from all three of the Governor's advisory councils on this project. Ms. Charney made a motion that the council co-sponsor the "Journey to America" exhibit, sponsored by the Tulsa YWCA and brought to the capitol by the State Arts Council, and extend an invitation to both the Governor's Advisory Council on Asian-American Affairs and the Governor's Ethnic American Advisory Council to join with them in co-sponsoring this event; seconded by Ms. Vasquez-Sykes. Motion carried unanimously. Ms. Charney agreed to coordinate this project with the other council chairs.

I. INTERPRETING ISSUES.

This item was covered in the Legal Translation and Interpretation Committee report.

J. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

Vice-Chair Perry reported that an official response has not been received from the FBI regarding the request for an investigation in the shooting death of Ricky Sanchez. Ms. Vasquez-Sykes commented that the NAACP received a response that stated that there was not enough information to make a valid ruling on this issue. Brenda Thornton again reminded the council that OPM was never provided a file copy of the official letter that was sent to the FBI and again requested that they furnish OPM with a copy of the letter.

K. NEW BUSINESS.

There were no items at this time.

L. COMMENTS FROM VISITORS.

There were no comments.

M. ADJOURNMENT.

Vice-Chair Perry adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.