Chicano Latino Affairs Council
Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: December 27, 2010
Board Members: Committee Chair N. Juarez, Council Chair M. Vargas, BM A. Garay-Lehn, BM E. Rodriguez
Staff: ED H. Garcia, Staff D. Espinoza
Guests: Diana Hamilton, Muriel Gubasta

Agenda Item	Discussion/Action Summary/Motions Adopted	Follow-Up/Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
Welcome & Review of Agenda	Meeting commences, no additions or changes to the agenda are made.		
Family Reunification Legislation	Diana Hamilton presents Family Reunification Legislation - Begins by introducing herself and her organization (Legal Aid Society). She works with the Youth Start Project, which represents children in the child protection system and homeless children. Bill comes out of this work. - Mainly works with trying to reduce racial disparities in the system. There are several disparities in the system, such as misreporting maltreatment. Studies show that across all ethnicities, there is a relatively equal level of mistreatment, but it is reported more in communities of color, giving the perception that maltreatment is more prominent in those communities. - Currently, there are about 615 children who become state wards every year, about 65 of which are Hispanic. This bill looks at children who remain in the foster system and don't get adopted. - The bill tries to reconnect reformed parents with their children who have become state wards - The minor child and some terminated parents can motion. Bill excludes parents whose rights were terminated for sexual abuse or egregious crimes.		

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	Eligible parents have to prove that the situation is completely different at present day. - The bill ultimately simply gives the right to motion. Once motion is made, other parties such as the county can become involved. County can challenge motions in best interest of the child, even if child wants to go home. - BM M. Vargas notes the fact that the parents' rights have been terminated for a reason should not be minimized. He notes that he likes the rectification component of the bill, but asks about possible future relapse of the parent, and whether parental right termination would exist again then. D. Hamilton notes that the county could come back in if neglect or other abuse were to occur again. She goes on to note that the bill would ultimately only end up changing the situation for a few number of families, and that most situations may not qualify. - BM M. Vargas asks how the bill would affect children who have moved in with extended family after being removed from parents (which occur often in the Latino community). D. Hamilton explains that those cases usually involve a transfer of custody, and therefore the bill would not affect those situations. Furthermore, the bill would not disrupt adoption. It primarily affects those who are not in a permanent home. - 5 other states have similar law implemented. Their experience is that only a few families are reunified a year (1-4). - BM M. Vargas asks about cases with American Indians. D. Hamilton notes that there is tribe involvement in those cases. - Due to how new these laws are in certain states, not much data or tracking has been done on the cases. - D. Hamilton is seeking two new Republican authors for the bill. She goes on to note that it will amend the current bill involved in the matter. - BM N. Juarez states that the matter will be presented to the full Board in February, and then create a position statement and fact sheet to follow it up (BM M. Vargas later notes that CLAC won't take it on as its own issue, but if approved, will have staff offer support and help find testimony participants) - D. Hamilton notes that originally there were going to be 3 meetings in January that dealt with childcare issues, but the situation has changed, so		

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	they're not quite sure of the timeline. As a result of the budget deficit, it may not be a top priority for the Legislator. It may also, however, have easy passage through the process. Ombudspersons Expansion - The Ombudspersons office is seeking to expand into other areas, such as corrections and education. - This expansion was suggested by Sen. Torres-Ray and Sen. Moua. - BM N. Juarez notes that they should be getting a response after the February 15th meeting. BM M. Vargas corrects the date, saying it's February 12th. (Note: Board meeting is actually February 19th). - BM N. Juarez requests a draft fact sheet and position statement on the Reunification Bill to present at next Board meeting. He notes that the current fact sheet explains enough about the bill, since it uses D. Hamilton's numbers and figures.	**ACTION ITEM: Prepare fact sheet and position statement on Family Reunification Bill for February Board Meeting**	**H. Garcia**
Update on Legislative Day at the Capitol	ED H. Garcia gives update of LLDC - BM E. Rodriguez notes that while the LLDC can be many things, the one thing it must be is a chance for the Council to be present and relevant to legislation. "Express yourself" may be a weak phrase, suggests something like "Be present, be heard!" - Estimated date is mid-March - BM M. Vargas is worried about school interference and other similar issues. BM A. Garay-Lehn notes need for organizations to be present in rotunda. - BM M. Vargas points out need to track important legislation, and use that legislation to help pick out speakers and presenters. - BM N. Juarez advises on looking at available dates ASAP, as well as getting and scheduling with possible speakers. - BM M. Vargas suggests having community members/constituents be the ones that send out requests to Legislators. - ED H. Garcia notes problem of being able to meet with Legislators due to major changes in the legislature. - BM E. Rodriguez asks if Community Member Rick Aguilar would be able to assist in booking Legislators. - BM A. Garay-Lehn notes that CLAC should involve itself in only 2 or 3 bills.	**ACTION ITEM: Begin scheduling speakers and reserving location.**	**H. Garcia**

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Tracking Sheets	ED H. Garcia clarifies tracking sheets. The charts track all bills, but only bills that affect the Latino community will have analysis informing the reader how the community is affected. BM E. Rodriguez suggests that any legislation we come to support would be good for us. ED H. Garcia notes that not many things have been discussed/introduced at the State level yet (note: only 7 bills were introduced during the October special session). DREAM Act - BM B. Juarez notes that the analysis on the DREAM Act isn't sufficient. He says that it needs to be heavy, but concise, analysis. BM E. Rodriguez notes that Mario Hernandez wrote a good mini-report on the DREAM Act when it first came up years ago and offered to make copies of it. - BM M. Vargas notes that the DREAM Act initially came about because there were several over-achieving Latino students who could not go to college because of their undocumented status. BM A. Garay-Lehn adds that it wasn't presented that way to Congress. Instead of it being presented as an opportunity for high-achieving students, it was presented as an immigration issue. Message should've been that it's an investment in the future. - Committee discusses how to get involved with pushing the DREAM Act. BM E. Rodriguez states that we should re-instate previous position in favor of the DREAM Act. - BM M. Vargas suggests meeting with Immigrant Freedom Network to discuss sentiments towards DREAM Act and move forward from there. BM N. Juarez notes that all bills need to be analyzed through reading the text and fact sheets, etc. (Note: BM N. Juarez states that he assumes that Staff D. Espinoza is doing the bill analysis. At previous Legislative Committee meeting in November, it was decided that ED H. Garcia would be in charge of analysis because he would be the one interacting most often with Legislators. As a result of this decision, ED H. Garcia did analysis for tracking charts). BM N. Juarez asks if the tracking sheets are available online. ED H. Garcia notes that they are, except that they do not include the pros/cons, stating that in an email thread, it was said that that analysis had to be brought up during the committee before having it posted. BM E. Rodriguez agrees that the email		

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	thread's language was confusing. BM N. Juarez states that now ED H. Garcia has direction now to get it updated and posted. BM A. Garay-Lehn brings up her suggestion of using an Excel document to track legislation, so that it stays organized. BM M. Vargas notes that this is a case of miscommunication. He states that the tracking sheets needed to be updated and brought to committee. Furthermore, revisions would be emailed to Chair of committee, and then be posted. He asks ED H. Garcia if he's been sending revisions to BM N. Juarez, to which ED H. Garcia responds yes. ED H. Garcia notes that analysis should not be posted online until passes through committee. BM N. Juarez comments that it should be posted immediately as it comes up. ED H. Garcia says he can quote emails that say otherwise. BM N. Juarez responds by saying that now there is direction and that analysis needs to be done. BM M. Vargas notes a miscommunication. He states that what was said was that the tracking charts needed to be emailed to Chair, have a conversation with the Chair, and then have charts posted. Whatever is posted needs to go through Committee Chair. BM E. Rodriguez notes that not too much needs to be done on the Federal level. Focus on the bills that will have funding trickle down to the State level.		
Break			
CLAC's Collaborative Program to Reduce Unemployment	ED H. Garcia updates that the cost of training and availability of jobs was carefully researched, particularly through MnDOT and MET Council. Cost of training individuals for positions will be about $5,000. Total for training is estimated to be $4 million. ED H. Garcia notes that the reinforcing documents for the bill are the Workforce and Economic Development fact sheet and position statements. BM E. Rodriguez notes confusion on how family reunification relates to this. BM N. Juarez notes that it was a typo on his behalf. BM M. Vargas expresses the sentiment that the bill is all over the place. BM E. Rodriguez asks who drafted the bill, to which ED H. Garcia responds the Revisor's office. BM E. Rodriguez states that Sen. Torres-Ray noted specifically that we shouldn't be asking for money, which BM E. Rodriguez states the bill does.		

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	BM M. Vargas notes that there has to be a way that the State has to be able to measure the success of whatever program is created. BM M. Vargas mentions Project Quest in San Antonio, Texas, a workforce development program for Latinos. There is a need for a more specific plan in the bill. BM N. Juarez notes that the reason he wanted a fact sheet and position statement was to answer question on the proposed bill, such as where the money goes, how many it'll potentially train, how many jobs it can potentially create, etc. The fact sheet is a selling point. BM E. Rodriguez asks about the number "4 million." ED H. Garcia quotes his research with MnDOT (a MnDOT representative is willing to testify). BM E. Rodriguez asks about timeline for training. BM M. Vargas expresses the sentiment that a thorough analysis of workforce development has not been done yet, what it looks like in Minnesota, what the standing resources are, and where money can be saved. BM N. Juarez notes that Light Rail construction has already begun, and if this bill gets passed, the soonest it would take effect would be May/June. BM A. Garay-Lehn suggests some of the money go to the Department of Labor and Industry, which will go to employees and train them. BM M. Vargas states that we need to utilize the resources the State already has and not "reinvent the wheel." BM E. Rodriguez expresses his belief that the bill will not go anywhere. He goes on to say he feels that the Economic Development track's momentum that had been built up before ED H. Garcia came on board has died down. During previous Economic Development meetings, it was decided that CLAC could encourage a task force that would advise the Council on what it can do. The task force was formed. BM E. Rodriguez says that the committee had decided that it needed to prove the assets of Latinos in Minnesota. It would partner with DEED to fund a study which would identify the workforce and where Latino businesses are. He goes on to say that he is unsure about the data present in the draft fact sheet. He goes on to say that if there are 5,000+ Latino businesses, then they need to be identified. BM M. Vargas believes ED H. Garcia's bill is directed at an immediate project, whereas the committee is looking at the broader picture of workforce development. He goes on to say that there isn't much time to bring this into	**ACTION ITEM: Prepare Fact Sheet and Position Statement for proposed bill**	**H. Garcia**

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	fruition, and there are too many questions. He goes on to ask what the workforce centers are looking like. He continues by saying that he's had conversations with workforce centers and says that they are strapped for cash. BM E. Rodriguez asks what the new Latino OIC's situation is. BM A. Garay-Lehn says that she's on the Board of Directors. (audio paused by request of BM M. Vargas) BM E. Rodriguez says that he believes Ramon Leon must have some long-term plan. ED H. Garcia says he's been meeting with Ramon Leon, along with John Flore, Daniel Bonilla, Juan Linares, and a guy from Willmar. However, they do not have their plan in place yet. ED H. Garcia has said he can try to get them funding for applicants, but they responded by saying that if they get that funding, they'll lose other funding. ED H. Garcia mentions 1:00pm meeting with a Legislator (Rep. Champion) to discuss going forward. BM E. Rodriguez notes that as a Board member, he would not approve going forward with the Bill as is. He asks what would happen after getting the $4 million. BM N. Juarez responds by saying the $4 million would not go to CLAC but rather to the Commissioner of Employment and Economic Development in order to come up with a program to administer these grants. BM M. Vargas says that if we're going to have a bill with dollars attached, that we need to be involved, and put the money in the hands of experts in the community to implement.		
	BM E. Rodriguez states that a problem is that he feels ED H. Garcia is trying to do everything himself. He goes on to say that the Economic Development committee should begin to convene to work on this. BM A. Garay-Lehn notes that it is good that ED H. Garcia is at least continuing on with the Economic Development work. BM M. Vargas notes that a big champion would be BM R. Sedarski due to her interest in Economic Development.	**ACTION ITEM: Convene Economic Development Committee**	**H. Garcia**
	BM E. Rodriguez notes that it's important to go back and review all the work that has been done, and that a lot of the work has died. ED H. Garcia notes that he's met with Commissioner McElroy and Rosa. BM E. Rodriguez asks about the Economic Development committee, to which ED H. Garcia responds that they have not met. BM A. Garay-Lehn notes that at least ED H. Garcia is keeping things going and building a base. BM N. Juarez notes that the committee is not going to have anything ready for the	**ACTION ITEM: Review past Economic Development work and build from there**	**H. Garcia**

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	Legislative session. He notes that it's nearly impossible to get the bill passed as it is now. BM A. Garay-Lehn says that that is why people testify, to explain the pros and cons. BM N. Juarez asks what those pros and cons are. BM M. Vargas notes that the mechanics and the plan are completely out. He goes out to say that the work won't be done in time to jump aboard this project which is already in progress. BM M. Vargas suggests we "cut our losses" and go back to the drawing board. The position statements are an initial discussion from the Legislative Committee, and explain the need to defer to Economic and Workforce Development experts. BM E. Rodriguez quotes the 2010 Legislative Recommendations document.BM N. Juarez notes that his drafts of the position statements stem from that document. BM M. Vargas states that he believes we stimulate, through our work, and supplement whatever efforts are right there right now to create jobs and retrain our people to reenter the job force. BM E. Rodriguez notes that the biggest majority by 2035, Latinos will be the biggest majority, so we need to stimulate the workforce of tomorrow. We need to be able to say there are a certain number of people ready to be trained, and explain the breakdown of needs, like language sensitivity. ED H. Garcia notes that that is stated in his draft position statements. BM N. Juarez responds by saying that a position statement is CLAC's position and that it's straightforward and to the point, supported by the fact sheet. He felt the ED H. Garcia's draft was too long and stressed the need for it to be 1 page. He goes on to say that it isn't clear what is being recommended to the Legislators and emphasizes the importance of legislative analysis and community forums. BM E. Rodriguez notes that after that data is collected it should go to the Economic Development Committee. He explains that a position statement shouldn't describe what CLAC is going to do, but rather, suggest to the Legislator that x, y, and z needs to be done. BM M. Vargas notes that the Economic Development Committee needs to be convened and asks BM E. Rodriguez what are the deliverables that ED H. Garcia can take to that committee. He goes on to suggest that BM R. Sedarski take leadership. BM A. Garay-Lehn asks if BM A. Lizano use to head that committee, which is responded with a yes.		

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	BM E. Rodriguez states that ED H. Garcia had tried to make up for the fact that the Economic Development Committee wasn't working, and then he went in a different direction from what the committee had begun with. BM A. Garay-Lehn notes that there was no direction. BM N. Juarez notes that we need updated fact sheets and position statements, especially in time for Latino Legislative Day at the Capitol. He goes on to note that there is nothing to hand out at Legislative Day at the Capitol except of an Immigration fact sheet and position statement. BM M. Vargas notes the need for BM E. Rodriguez's help in the Economic Development area. BM N. Juarez notes that Legislators have said that a position statement cannot be too wordy, and must be less than a page for them to actually read it. BM A. Garay-Lehn suggests everyone working together in order to clarify misunderstandings. BM M. Vargas responds by saying that they do work together, but that the ED needs to do the work because he's the paid employee. BM N. Juarez separated workforce development and economic development because otherwise it'd be too large. For workforce development, he notes that there are already models out there; it's just a question of utilizing those models. As for economic development, it's a question of stimulating the economy and how to help businesses get back on their feet, whether they sell or manufacture. How do we get businesses back on their feet so that they can hire new employees? BM M. Vargas adds that it's important to add who is employing Latinos. He goes on to add that the OIC may not be the place to place all financial recommendation, but they need to be center. BM N. Juarez notes that he'd be happy to turn over Economic and Workforce Development documents to another committee, in hopes of having documents authorized to be presented to Board in February. He goes on to add that there needs to be something to hand out at Legislative Day at the Capitol. BM M. Vargas notes that we can at least revise the Legislative Recommendations document. BM M. Vargas notes the need to understand how much the State is investing into workforce development of minorities. BM E. Rodriguez says that it's as though we are still on day one of the research. BM A. Garay-Lehn notes that there are items in the research done so far that can		

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	be extracted and expanded upon. BM M. Vargas suggests the Legislative Committee continue with being responsible for the economic development work and include BM R. Sedarski, paying attention to her schedule.		
Update on Representative and Senator Meetings	ED H. Garcia notes that he has a meeting with Rep. Champion at 1pm, but all other Legislators are holding off until the Legislative Session begins.		
Next Steps	BM E. Rodriguez notes that he does not want to be part of the Legislative Committee, but would be willing to help while it is focusing on Economic Development.		
Adjourned	Next Meeting: January 14, 2011 at 3pm		