



Testimony of the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs  
*House of Representatives Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education*  
*February 19, 2015*

Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Phillips, Representatives Derickson, Kunze, and Patterson, my name is Lilly Cavanaugh. I am honored to serve you as Executive Director of the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission.

On behalf of our Board of Commissioners and our 389,271 constituents, thank you for your consideration of the Governor’s 2016 -17 funding recommendations. As you know, Hispanics continue to lead our state’s population growth with a 63.4% increase since 2,000. We are proud to contribute to Ohio’s economic turnaround and global competitiveness with more than 9,700 Hispanic-owned businesses and \$2.3 billion in receipts. Our population is young, vibrant global, multilingual and committed to excel in Ohio and improve our communities.

Our team works tirelessly to implement our Governor’s priorities and to fulfill our legislative mandates. In the last two years, we have increased our capacity building efforts by conducting summits, seminars, workshops and events that provide our communities and its leaders with the tools to successfully function and excel in society. In 2013 we reached 1,245 participants and that increased by 60% in 2014, with over 2,000 individuals. Given this subcommittee’s focus on primary and secondary education, you will be pleased to know we will continue our search for “best practices” to teach minority and economically disadvantaged students. We understand that education is the great equalizer, and for that reason we partnered with Ohio State University for our 2014 Latino Education Summit and the University of Akron will host this year’s conference in two weeks.

Likewise, in cooperation with the Minority Health Commission, we joined with Mount Carmel Hospitals to host our 2014 Latino Health Summit. This year we are pleased to announce that Nationwide Children’s Hospital will serve as the venue for this important learning exchange. In addition, we offer regional training workshops to address behavioral health, domestic violence, and wellness issues in support of Governor’s Kasich’s health transformation aspirations.

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Our legislative mandates require us to recognize and celebrate the contributions of our Distinguished Hispanic Ohioans and Latino serving organizations. In the last two years, 24 leaders including 5 Latino Military Service of Distinction Awards have officially been honored by our board. Last November, two of our community leaders were inducted into the prestigious Ohio Veterans' Hall of Fame. We were also pleased to endorse the legislation for the Congressional Gold Medal recently awarded to the Borinqueneers, the only active-duty exclusively Latino military unit in United States history,

Through our interagency council mandate we work with state agencies to support and improve their outreach to Hispanic Ohioans. For example, our office regularly collaborates with over 30 federal and state agencies, as well as private partners to bring opportunities, build capacity, prepare leaders, and make sure that Latinos and their organizations have the necessary tools to progress. Our collaboration offers agencies in depth knowledge and understanding of the Latino community, their language and customs thus decreasing or eliminating cultural and communication barriers. At the same time, our agency's established networks and trust within the community increases the impact of any outreach campaign, educational effort or service and decreases costs for state government. An example of one such event is the Civil Rights Town Hall, in collaboration with the US Attorney, the Civil Rights Commission, ODJFS, Department of Health, among others. We are also members of Attorney General DeWine's Commission to combat human trafficking.

We utilize our extensive networks to alert our constituents to time sensitive severe weather warnings and other emergency situations in order to prevent health epidemics such as influenza, ebola, and the more recent measles outbreak. Additionally, through social media and our website, we maintain a robust information hub with a directory of more than 200 Latino serving organizations, a public calendar of statewide events submitted by Hispanic serving groups and critical time sensitive resources; in fact in 2014 more than 5,500 items were shared through these mediums. Furthermore, our team is always ready to meet direct constituent requests and has bilingual resources and directories at hand to refer constituents to attorneys, doctors, government agencies, nonprofit organizations.

Our commission is committed to increasing efficiencies, remaining innovative and building partnerships that result in excellent services for Hispanic Ohioans and the state of Ohio. More details and evidence of return on taxpayer investment in your Commission can be found in our annual reports and the public information available on our Website - <http://ochla.ohio.gov>. Thank you very much for your invitation to testify today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.

