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Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs FY 20-21 Biennial Budget Testimony

Tuesday, April 29, 2019
Government and Agency Review Committee
133rd General Assembly

Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member O'Brien, and esteemed Senators, my name is Lilly Cavanaugh and it is my honor to serve as Executive Director of this commission. On behalf of our Board and our 437,000 constituents, thank you for your consideration of Governor DeWine's biennial funding recommendations.

As Hispanics approach the half million mark in Ohio, we have become a dynamic economic force in our State. There are over 16,000 businesses accumulating \$2.8 billion in receipts; our buying power grew 443 percent between 1990-2013 and was projected to reach \$11.7 billion by last year. Close to 97,000 Latinos enrich our classrooms; twenty four Latino elected officials are serving in cities, counties and state government—including our General Assembly—and there are more than 16,300 Latino Military Veterans who along those Hispanic men and women in active duty, serve and protect Ohio and the nation.

Our commission is committed to help implement Governor DeWine's priorities and to fulfill our legislative mandates. We work with state and local governments, as well as the non-profit and private sector to build sustainable programs and initiatives that aim to alleviate the causes of poverty, increase economic and educational opportunities, and strengthen inclusion of Latinos across the state. Examples of this work include our Project PIPELine, launched in 2018 in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education, the Eastland-Fairfield Career and Technical Schools, Rosemore Middle School and trade representatives. This pilot program seeks to support diverse youth in pursuit of a career in skilled trades through mentorship and experiential education in Central Ohio. The PIPELine to Trades has expanded to Toledo this year and will be extended to Cincinnati in 2020.



Through our work with five Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, we are connecting entrepreneurs with the market, minority businesses with contracting opportunities and members with jobs; in fact during 2018, over 1300 job openings were directly promoted by our agency.

Our Commission's ability to meet its mandates is strengthened by partnerships representing more than 50 close collaborators including The Ohio State University, The University of Akron, The University of Cincinnati, the Great Lakes Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC), the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Minority Health Commission and others in the business sector. Collaborations enable us to build local investment and create sustainability as we implement summits, conferences and leadership seminars, resulting in over 3000 individuals reached in the last two years. Our agency builds civic engagement and encourages participation in public affairs. A robust bilingual civic education campaign included more than 6,000 multilingual flyers and posters distributed through non-partisan organizations in order to increase voter registration and turnout of Hispanic Ohioans in the 2018 elections. Likewise, we are heavily invested in the Census Complete Count efforts and serve on the National Latino Census 2020 Commission through the National Association of Latino Elected Officials. Like you, we are keenly aware of what is at risk if hard to count populations like ours are missed—not only \$33.5 billion in federal funding, but also how many seats Ohio receives in the U.S. House of Representatives as well as the boundaries for Congressional and local legislative districts.

Our team efficiently fulfills our mandate to connect constituents to state government. For example, in 2017-2018, staff logged 400 visits to communities across Ohio and processed 800 constituent case inquiries. Through the use of technology, we connected with 44,000 virtual visitors and recorded an average of 21,000 social media postings to inform Latinos and the public about government, job opportunities and resources. As you know, virtual connectivity is an important means to educate the public, as well as a critical tool we utilize in times of emergencies and natural disasters to support and instruct the Latino community. Our hub of information includes multiple directories and OLANet—the Ohio Latino Network—with more than 400+ organizations in its electronic database accessible to the public and government agencies at anytime. This high level of productivity and engagement demands a talented and versatile team. Our small workforce is comprised of just three full time and one intermittent staff (currently with another intermittent position vacant.) At 3.5 FTEs, we have created a robust Internship and Volunteer Program, not only to serve our constituents, but to develop student and young professionals. They are able to learn leadership skills, engage in legislative and government affairs, and acquire work experience that strengthens highly valued multi-



cultural skills, increases their global perspective and their understanding of Hispanic Ohioans.

We respectfully ask you to support our Commission's FY 20-21 biennial budget recommendation as submitted by Governor DeWine which will enable our board and team to continue our current programs and satisfy our statutory mandates. Our commission is committed to increasing efficiencies, remaining innovative and continuing to strengthen partnerships with government agencies, non-profits and the private sector that result in excellent services for Hispanic Ohioans and progress for 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.

