

Virginia Latino Advisory Board Meeting
December 14, 2018 - 10am - 2:15pm
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311

Meeting Minutes

In attendance

Edgar Aranda, Cecilia Barbosa (Chair), Juan Espinoza, Karina Kline-Gabel (Secretary), Melody Gonzales, Edgar Lara, Dania Matos, Aida Pacheco, Sergio Rimola, Carmen Romero, Ana Solorio, Cecilia Williams, Jorge Yinat

Not in attendance Paul Berry, Damien Cabezas, Victoria Cartagena, Eugene Chigna, J. Michael Martinez, Gloria Maria Pena Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones

Staff & Counsel Justin Bell - Assistant Attorney General, Maribel Castaneda - Staff Liaison, Fernando Mercado-Violand - Director of Latino Outreach

Call to Order Cecilia Barbosa called meeting to order at 10:16am. Quorum met.

Welcome Cecilia Barbosa introduced and welcomed new members: Edgar Lara from Charlottesville (Sin Barreras) and Melody Gonzalez from Arlington (National Education Association).

Public Comment No public comment.

Consideration of Previous Minutes 9/24/2018 Aida Pacheco moved to approve minutes, seconded by Jorge Yinat. Motion passed unanimously.

Forum Report Community Forum in NOVA was a success on 12/13/18. Around 100 people, including providers and citizens, participated in a discussion on Medicaid expansion with Deputy Secretary Marvin Figueroa. The presentation was followed by an extensive question and answer session. The event was presented in both Spanish and English.



Board Members

Aida Pacheco | Ana Solorio | Carmen Romero | Cecilia Barbosa | Cecilia Williams | Damien Cabezas | Dania Matos | Edgar Aranda-Yanoc | Edgar Lara | Eugene Chigna | Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold | J. Michael Martinez de Andino | Jorge Yinat | Juan Espinoza | Karina Kline-Gabel | Melody Gonzales | Paul Berry | Sergio Rimola | Victoria Cartagena | Vivian Sanchez-Jones

Board Meeting Goals and Charges The Governor has charged VLAB to provide the administration with recommendations on the following topics: Strengthening state contract and procurement opportunities, increasing affordable housing, addressing wage theft, and increasing access to and diversity of state government. In addition, VLAB plans to provide recommendations in areas that it feels are important for the prosperity and well-being of Latinx communities: increasing their civic engagement and business opportunities, and improving health and education. Cecilia Barbosa encouraged committees to decide on their top 2 or 3 recommendations to bring to the Governor's attention. The full board will later vote on these recommendations. Cecilia Barbosa suggested that our executive summary could focus on fewer recommendations to make a bigger impact. The other recommendations could be included in a larger document. She also suggested that, following the issuance of the report, Board members focus on working with the administration and other parties to encourage and advance implementation of the recommendations. Responses from board members included:

- Dania Matos applauded the idea and encouraged the board to embed strategies on intersectionality as we make these recommendations.
- Aida Pacheco added that liaisons should come to the committee meetings to identify common threads that are being addressed by the administration.
- Jorge Yinat spoke of the need of an overarching strategy. He emphasized the need to invest time and build bridges with other sections of the population as well as with other well-organized incubators and chambers. For example, he highlighted that the Virginia Chamber's blueprint does not explicitly include information on Latino Virginians.
- Cecilia Barbosa commented that she has reached out to the Asian Advisory Board and will connect with them to see if we can get a better idea of what they've done in regard to their recommendations and/or report in the past.
- Karina Kline-Gabel suggested that VLAB look towards creating an event at which Latinos from other governmental boards would meet with VLAB members. VLAB Counsel, Justin Bell, gave examples of joint meetings and retreats that have already taken place between boards.
- Melody Gonzalez questioned how can we gather more information through social media on Latinos working on similar governmental boards.

VLAB Civic Engagement Awards Presentations

Chair of Civic Engagement Committee, Karina Kline-Gabel, shared the names of the 3 winners of the first VLAB Civic Engagement Latinx Awards. Mr. Walter Tejada received the award at the community forum for the non-profit category and Dr. Katherine Barko-Alva received her award in the education category at the quarterly Board meeting. Dr. Barko-Alva addressed the board and described her work. Ms. Iris Merida was not available to accept the award in the business category in person but Jorge Yinat accepted the award on her behalf. Staff liaison, Maribel Castañeda will prepare a press release before the yearend.

Committee Reports and Discussion of Key Priorities

EDUCATION

In the absence of Committee Chair, Eugene Chigna, Juan Espinoza reported on visits around the Commonwealth to introduce the new college application process. Families and students attended these conversations and expressed that financial concerns were the main area that restricted students' higher education objectives.

Top Recommendation: Institute a systemic approach to training ESL Certification: There is a need to increase required training hours and certification of ESL instructors.

Additional recommendation: increase numbers of Latino educators.

HEALTH

Committee Chair, Sergio Rimola, reported on the limited access to health care and lack of diversity in linguistic and cultural health care.

Top Recommendation: Strengthen the pipeline for Latino health and mental health care providers.

Additional recommendations: 1) Create online access to data and analytics on the health of minorities in Virginia. 2) Reduce the stricter qualifications required in Virginia when applying for Medicaid when compared to the Federal qualification of 5 years legal residency.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Committee Chair, Karina Kline-Gabel, reported that the first VLAB Civic Engagement Awards were a success and recommended an additional category for "emerging leaders" since some of the nominations this year were for younger adults. In addition to the awards, the committee has also helped plan and execute the VLAB Community Forum. Additional topics researched include low levels of outreach to Latino voters in Virginia.

Top Recommendation: Charge the Secretaries of Administration and Education to develop a Strategic Plan for Civic Engagement Education/Voter Registration Education. The Plan would identify underrepresented communities; increase community organizing; increase voter registration and participation; establish networks; and identify best practices to increase participation and access by marginalized communities.

Additional recommendation: Grant driving privileges to undocumented residents in order to increase road safety, increase state revenues, and allow for more participation in civic and community engagement events and transportation to the polls.

BUSINESS

Committee Chair, Jorge Yinat, reported that Virginia is ranked #4 in the nation in business according to Forbes but our Latino community is still underrepresented in business. The committee has been working with the Director of the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD) to improve data on Latinx participation in government procurement.

Top Recommendation: Driving Privilege Card for undocumented residents in the Commonwealth, including the support of Bills currently introduced in the General Assembly. Additional Recommendation: Request the Governor to charge the SBSBD with developing a plan to increase Latinx participation in State procurement, to include assessing the extent of participation, reasons for the current level of participation, and strategies to increase participation.

Comments: VLAB Counsel, Justin Bell, suggested that both committee reports (Business and Civic Engagement) should include the driving privileges recommendations on their reports to strengthen the urgency of the recommendation.

WAGE THEFT

Edgar Aranda reported on wage theft. He agreed with the report that former board member, Chris Falcon, had written.

Top recommendation: To reduce the incidence of wage theft, introduce legislation to require employers to provide employees with pay stubs.

Additional recommendation: Increase budget to hire additional wage theft investigators.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In the absence of Committee Chair, Mike Martinez, Carmen Romero shared that the Commonwealth does not have the right tools to meet the demands of affordable housing in Virginia, particularly in Northern Virginia. Six of our Commonwealth cities have the highest eviction rates in the US. This problem primarily affects people of color. The current situation may worsen after Amazon sets up second headquarters in Crystal City, Virginia.

Top Recommendation: Increase the housing trust fund to \$20 million annually.

Additional recommendations: 1) Create more production tools to reduce barriers to affordable housing. 2) Endorse the eviction prevention recommendations presented by the Campaign to Reduce Evictions (CARE). Tenants need to know their rights and become more educated on the process.

GOVERNMENT ACCESS

Aida Pacheco reported on the need to increase diversity at all levels of the administration and to create a network for state employees who are Latino, which is essential to create a pipeline. Members of Latinx communities need to participate in high-level strategic leadership opportunities that are aligned with the Governor's priorities, such as commissions.

Top Recommendation: Request the Governor to charge all secretariats to prepare a Diversity Action Plan with the aim to increase the employment, participation and leadership opportunities for underrepresented groups, including members of Latinx communities.

Additional recommendation: Create a network for Latinx state employees, to strengthen pipeline and provide mentors.

Board Officer Nominations and New Business

1) Cecilia Barbosa suggested adding committee chairs to the executive committee to help finalize the report and to help facilitate meetings with officers and compliance with FOIA rules.

Dania Matos made a motion to include committee chairs as members of the Executive Committee. Aida Pacheco seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2) Ana Solorio moved to establish a timeline that will allow the executive committee to finalize a draft of the yearly report by January 25, 2019. At that point, VLAB members can comment on any final changes online. The Board would submit a final report by January 31, 2019.

Discussion: Board members will then vote on the finalized report at the next Board meeting in February 2019.

Vote: Jorge Yinat seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

2) Cecilia Barbosa updated the board on upcoming nominations for leadership seats in March. In an attempt to standardize this procedure, Cecilia Barbosa proposed that, since the bylaws do not include a process for nominations and VLAB has no procedures for nominating officers, an ad-hoc committee be appointed to propose a protocol. Best practices for boards include a nomination committee to consider candidates, look at qualifications, and then make recommendations for the next cycle of leadership. All VLAB members would always be free to self-nominate or nominate others to the ad hoc committee, but this group would be charged with coming up with a slate of nominations for the board to vote on yearly. Cecilia Barbosa asked for volunteers to be on this committee and mentioned that it would preferably be composed of Board members who are not immediately interested in VLAB leadership positions.

Cecilia Barbosa moved to develop an ad-hoc nominating committee charged with developing a nomination process and proposing a slate of officer nominees for consideration by the board. The nominating committee would be temporary, to be dissolved upon completion of its charge. The final decision on the composition of the nominating committee will be made by the current Executive committee. Aida Pacheco seconded the motion.

Discussion: Members expressed pros and cons as to how an executive team is nominated but consensus favored the general idea to develop a policy for nominations for the board for subsequent officers for the next cycle. Jorge Yinat expressed concern about the purpose of and need for a nomination committee, adding that everyone on the board is qualified for leadership positions and it should be sufficient to nominate or self-nominate board officers without a nomination committee. Responses from board members and VLAB Counsel, Justin Bell affirmed that this committee would be a positive step for the board and re-iterated that self nominations would be welcomed but the committee would help with the organization of the process so that the executive committee would not need to take this charge in addition to its many other responsibilities.

Vote: opposed (1) abstaining (2) Motion passes.

Note: There was no time remaining for the legislative report, the Latino outreach report or the 2019 meeting and event calendar approval.

Meeting adjourned: 2:25pm