

Virginia Latino Advisory Board Meeting
Monday – September 24, 2018 11am-4pm
Patrick Henry Building - 1111 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance Edgar Aranda, Cecilia Barbosa, Paul Berry, Damien Cabezas, Eugene Chigna, Juan Espinoza, Karina Kline-Gabel, J. Michael Martinez, Dania Matos, Aida Pacheco, Sergio Rimola, Gloria Maria Pena Rockhold, Carmen Romero, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Ana Solorio, Cecilia Williams, Jorge Yinat

Not in Attendance Mercedes Santos-Bell, Victoria Cartagena, Estuardo Rodriguez

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

Call to Order Meeting was called to order at 11:00am. Quorum met.

Comments from Chair, Cecilia Barbosa

Chair, Cecilia Barbosa, welcomed new board members Paul Berry, Carmen Romero, and Edgar Aranda and requested that existing VLAB members introduce themselves and mention their cultural and professional background. Ms. Barbosa also welcomed a visitor to the meeting, Ms. Tiana Smith.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Consideration of minutes of previous meeting (7/26/18)

VLAB Counsel, Justin Bell requested two edits to the minutes: that "guests" be substituted with "Counsel and Staff" and that the description of FOIA be edited to read "Virginia's FOIA law supports the federal law which promotes access for the public to keep them engaged in what its government is doing." Board member, J. Mike Martinez moved to approve minutes with edits, seconded by Board member, Eugene Chigna. Motion passed unanimously.



Board Members

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

Comments by Secretary Kelly Thomasson

Secretary Thomasson thanked VLAB members for all of their important work and introduced Fernando Mercado-Violand and Maribel Castaneda to our new members highlighting the important work they are both doing in the Governor's office. Secretary Thomasson mentioned the 300 different state boards that exist under her office and her commitment to ensure that our governmental boards reflect our diverse Virginians. She also encouraged members of the board to help find Latinx representatives to serve on other boards - outside of VLAB. Currently Latinx representatives are already serving in 20 governmental boards in the state. The Secretary of the Commonwealth is also heading the efforts the Virginia Census 2020 and highlighted the importance of being able to identify the people of our state, despite the controversy surrounding the citizenship question on the census form that is currently being litigated.

VLAB member Dania Matos added that she hopes the state government has considered initiatives that will help connect members of the Latinx community and other communities to governmental representatives. Secretary Thomasson agreed and shared the current approaches to educating others on government boards have been limited to conference calls and social media but hopes that additional meet & greets will take place throughout the state.

Legislative Report

VLAB Staff Liaison, Maribel Castaneda, reported that she and her team will be visiting areas in Virginia to spread the word on government appointment information and openings. She also reported the contributions that college intern, Alejandro Lucero, is making to VLAB by helping with social media posts to highlight the work of the board. Ms. Castaneda also announced Governor Northam's official declaration of Hispanic & Latino Heritage Month in Virginia.

Latino Outreach Report

Fernando Mercado-Violand, Director of Latino Outreach, introduced a new initiative to address the challenges of college applications for low income applicants. The new college application titled, Coalition, will replace The Common Application in certain colleges and universities that have elected to join this effort. These institutions have committed to being debt free or low debt inspired schools. The new platform seeks to better engage students from disadvantaged backgrounds by emphasizing college preparation from the beginning of high school.

Virginia Secretary of Education, Atif Qarni, will attend the university visits starting with VA Tech to highlight these incentives in partnership with VLAB member, Juan Espinoza. Mr. Espinoza shared posters to advertise the visits that will take place between Oct. 1 - Nov. 1, 2018.

After completing this educational outreach, Mr. Mercado-Violand mentioned that attention will then turn to how to reach out to communities that qualify for Medicaid. He and Deputy Secretary of Health, Marvin Figueroa, will be partnering to create an outreach model for Virginia similar to the Affordable Care Act.

Presentation on Demographic Information on Latinos in Virginia

The presentation by The Commonwealth Institute was given by Laura Goren, Research Director and Freddy Mejia, Health Policy Analyst. The Institute is a 501C3 non-partisan research organization that seeks to identify the impact of public policy on low income Virginians. This research was inspired by the conclusion that the economic contributions of Latino Virginians are typically forgotten or ignored. VLAB members were given handouts on the slides presented and presenters encouraged VLAB members to contact them with any further questions. See attachment for presentation slides.

Laura Goren laura@thecommonwealthinstitute.org and Freddy Mejia freddy@thecommonwealthinstitute.org

FOIA Training Update

Board member, Mike Martinez, informed the board that he and Justin Bell were trying to propose a modification to Virginia's FOIA law in regard to board committee meetings. Currently, the law makes it difficult to meet synchronously online or through conference calls without a physical quorum. A proposal has been drafted and sent to the Governor's staff with recommendations for advisory boards. The proposal will then be shared with VLAB. Justin said it has a low chance of changing, due to the sensitive nature of FOIA's commitment to ensuring an open government; however, Mr. Bell also feels the proposal is an important step in starting this conversation.

Fall Forum Update

The date for the VLAB Community Forum is now confirmed for Nov 17, 2018 at Hampton University. Details are still being worked out for the day's events and they will be communicated to the board as soon as they become available.

Jorge asked about how to handle attendance at the Forum by the board since reimbursement confirmation has not been communicated. Maribel hopes to have an answer to us by the end of the week.

Committee Meetings

Chair, Cecilia Barbosa, encouraged committees to use the rest of the afternoon to work on their committee priorities and report outlines.

After committees met, the Chair asked for short reports on meetings and particularly wanted to hear about any observations of how their topics intersected with other areas. Comments by VLAB members suggested there be some future efforts on strategic planning and possibly yearly themes for future reports.

Final Comments & Adjournment

Special Counsel to VLAB, Justin Bell, encouraged everyone to check voter registration details since some accounts have been deleted due to non-voting histories.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm

Important Upcoming Dates: Community Forum November 17, 2018 at Hampton University
Minutes Submitted by Karina Kline-Gabel, Virginia Latino Advisory Board, Secretary