

Virginia Latino Advisory Board
Thursday, July 10, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Webex

In attendance: Paul Berry (Chair), Karina Kline-Gabel (Vice Chair), C. Alexander Guzmán (Secretary), Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Juan Espinoza, Carmen Romero, Damien Cabezas, Melody Gonzales, Manuel Leiva, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins

Not in attendance: Eugene Chigna, Jorge Yinat, Edgar Aranda, Manuel Leiva

Staff & Counsel: Maribel Castañeda, Danielle Campbell, Traci DeShazor, Kelly Thomasson

Call to Order 9:30 AM

Paul Berry called the meeting to order

Motion: Karina Kline-Gabel motions to adopt the May minutes. X seconded. All members present were in favor, none against, and no abstentions.

Ayes: Paul Berry, Karina Kline-Gabel, C. Alexander Guzmán, J. Michael Martinez de Andino, Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Sergio Rimola, Juan Espinoza, Carmen Romero, Melody Gonzales, Manuel Leiva, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Motion passes

Motion: Aida Pacheco motions to approve the meeting agenda. Sergio Rimola seconded.

Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Juan Espinoza, Carmen Romero, Melody Gonzales, Manuel Leiva, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Motion passes

Danielle discussed housekeeping matters

Public Comment

Leni Gonzalez of Arlington commented on behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). LULAC has concerns about the response to assist the Latino communities in the state during the pandemic. Stated Latinos represent about 10% of the state population, but 60% of the COVID-positive

cases. Gonzalez is also concern with the end of the eviction moratorium, specifically in Northern Virginia, and the lack of bilingual/bicultural contact tracers.

Michel Zajur commented on behalf of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He stated PPP loans are still available. Latinos are not obtaining these types of loans. The Chamber does webinars in Spanish on how to get these loans and grants and offers one-on-one appointments. The Chamber is also putting together the most comprehensive list of Latin businesses in the state. The Chamber's annual Que Pasa Festival will be held virtually this year during Hispanic Heritage Month. The Chamber will also be promoting a Hispanic Restaurant Week.

Vilma Seymour with LULAC in the Richmond Region echoes Leni's concerns. Stated lots of issues in Richmond region that need to be addressed in regards to COVID.

Chris Falcon of Arlington, former VLAB member, wanted to commend the Board for being at the forefront of the COVID response. Commented that he would like the board to keep the eviction moratorium in mind. Stated there are enormous problems with housing insecurity. Urged the board to reach out to nonprofits in our areas to ensure they are receiving funding for rent payments.

Jorge Ivan Soto introduced himself as the new VLAB intern. He studies public policy at the University of Chicago.

Chair's report (Paul Berry) 9:55 AM

- Good morning everyone – I'm very pleased to see you here and looking forward to today's agenda.
- Principally today, I want to capitalize on the terrific work that the committee chairs have brought about. This year has not been without its many cascading challenges for VLAB. I know you all agree that the solutions we are reviewing represent a great opportunity to rise to this challenge.
- June was another busy month but filled with productivity.
- I'm proud of the excellent collaboration between ourselves and the staff in the Commonwealth secretariat, and the pace of work has not slowed since we last met. The biggest event I'm happy to report on is a press conference the Governor held in Fairfax County, drawing direct attention to the needs of the heavily impacted Latino communities. Sergio and Ceci Williams joined me at this.
- Later in the month, I co-authored an op-ed along with the chairs of the AAPI, African American, and Women's boards where we discussed the bias, discrimination, and pain that continues to exist in Virginia.
- A few days after this, I joined Cecilia Barbosa and the rest of the Health Equity Working Group in submitting a recommendation to the Governor that he declare racism a public health emergency.
- During the month, I also wrote two letters to Governor Northam. The first voiced my support to extend local control over a pause in housing evictions. The second was a letter of support for elements of the special session agenda announced by the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus.

- I also attended several virtual meetings with civic and advocacy organizations such as VACIR, Edu-Futuro, and the Virginia Community College System, who asked me to join a four-month taskforce convened by the Chancellor to evaluate the curriculum for law enforcement professionals.
- Lastly, just yesterday, I gave a keynote speech to students at the Hispanic College Institute, led by our own Mr. Juan Espinoza and Vice Chair Karina Kline-Gabel.
- Good morning everyone – I’m very pleased to see you here and looking forward to today’s agenda.
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- Lastly, just yesterday, I gave a keynote speech to students at the Hispanic College Institute, led by our own Mr. Juan Espinoza and Vice Chair Karina Kline-Gabel.
- Today, I hope that we can take up the committee reports and begin finalizing our annual report recommendations. Our work should not stop there; I am still greatly concerned with health services that could be made available to qualifying Virginia residents through emergency Medicaid expansion. The Department of Housing and Community Development requested \$200 million dollars for the rent relief program, and with a discussion later today I hope we can recommend that this issue be taken up during the special General Assembly session. Also, we have a great opportunity to seize the headwinds of an employment and diversity discussion. We can talk about these during new business.
- For now, I’m thrilled to see you all here, and I look forward to our discussion.

Karina Klein-Gabel asks if Governor provided any sense of how they are handling the disparities with COVID.

Paul Berry responds by stating the Governor focused on the communication issue.

Administrative Report (Danielle Campbell) 10:03 AM

The website has new feature that allows public subscribe to the VLAB email list. They have also finalized a one-pager explaining the Virginia Latino Advisory Board.

Latino Outreach Update (Maribel Castañeda) 10:06 AM

The Latino Outreach weekly emails are transitioning to Constant Contact. VLAB supported the Governor's bilingual press conference in Fairfax. Thanks to Paul Berry, Sergio Rimola and Cecilia Williams. That was followed by a roundtable discussion. They are still organizing concerns and following up with specific organizations in Northern Virginia.

19 Latinos have applied for service on a state Board or Commission since the last VLAB meeting. Continue encouraging others to apply. Maribel also stated she is continuing to work on Hispanic Heritage Month activities and supporting messaging around the Census and COVID-19

Annual Report Guidelines Discussion (Danielle Campbell) 10:15 AM

Danielle spoke about the timeline. Will work with appropriate staff to discuss recommendations.

Carmen Romero asked about the nature of the annual report and whether recommendations can be revisited. Danielle explains it may be okay to revisit items, especially in response to COVID.

Paul Berry clarifies there is no stipulation on the length of the report.

Melody Gonzales suggests that the report should speak to all the numerous issues that have arisen in the last few months. Says she would hate for someone to view the report and perceive that these are the only items the Board is focusing on.

Cecilia Barbosa suggests organizing the report around themes as opposed to committees

Focus Area Recommendations and Discussion (Danielle) 10:28 AM

Education and Workforce Development Committee

The Committee met with Secretary Qarni. They have developed the following recommendations:

- Legislative Recommendations
 - Fully fund and better fund the state's educational budgets to address those disparities exacerbated by the pandemic
 - Require increased diversity at all agency levels
 - Establishing permanent D&I policies
 - Increasing TANF and SNAP funding
 - Increase the minimum wage
 - Relief funds for those impacted by layoffs due to the virus

- Administrative
 - Education
 - Data-driven dashboard report on data-oriented goals focused on outcomes for Latinx faculty and students
 - Strengthening education, recruitment and retention of Latinx educators
 - Implementation of in-state tuition for immigrant students
 - Evaluating and changing policies and practices that perpetuate systemic racism
 - Allowing ESL students to stay in public school to age 22
 - Workforce Development
 - Open and accessible government services
 - Establishing a dashboard with goals for diverse and equitable employment
 - Increase in appointment of Latinx officials in government
 - Bilingual/bicultural communications and outreach staff in government agencies
 - Clarifying worker rights during the pandemic
 - Protecting migrant and seasonal workers

Health Committee

Cecilia Barbosa provided the following recommendations on behalf of the Health Committee

- No immigration status check or ICE involvement
- Spanish-language helpline for those who need testing
- Develop set of coordinated strategies to address prevention and treatment as well as the socioeconomic consequences of COVID.
- Treatment
 - Medicaid emergency service for COVID testing
 - Paid leave for COVID-19
 - Access
 - Translation of materials and data
 - Increasing funding for interpreters
 - Behavioral health
 - Access to community health workers

Business Committee

Paul Berry provided the recommendations on behalf of the Business Committee.

- Change reporting requirements for immigration officials (shall not report misdemeanors)
- Hire staff for Chief Data Officer
- Hire inspectors to combat wage theft
- Expand authority to investigate employee wage complaints
- Provide PPE for workers
- Create an emergency childcare fund

- Condition receipt of financial aid to businesses that have retain staff
- Broadband expansion for Latino communities

Civic Engagement Committee

Karina Kline-Gabel provided the recommendations on behalf of the Civic Engagement Committee

- Charge the Secretary of Administration to develop plans for voter franchise expansion
- Correct disparities to voting during the pandemic
- Ensure Spanish-language website accessibility
- Translate the entire Board of Elections website to Spanish
- Bring on VLAB interns
- Encourage 211 to open regional offices
- Continue promoting Census 2020

Housing Committee

Carmen Romero reported that the committee met with Erik Johnston, Director of the Departmental of Housing and Community Development. The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- Expanding eviction prevention programs
- Rent relief programs targeted towards those who cannot access traditional programs, such as undocumented Virginians
- \$50 million rent relief program for populations of color
- Production of affordable housing through the Housing Trust Fund (HTF)
- Right to counsel for tenants as a defense to eviction proceedings
- Eliminating the provision of attorney's fees in eviction cases for plaintiffs
- Proper notice for evictions
- Including legal aid information on all eviction notices
- 6-month financial relief to landlords
- Translated rental agreements available in Spanish
- List of tenant/landlord rights available to all Virginia renters
- Statewide initiatives on patterns of segregation in the Commonwealth
- Development of a housing equity taskforce
- Addressing mobile home parks and manufactured housing

Misc. Board Business (10:35)

Carmen Romero introduced a letter to Gov Northam asking he consider a statewide eviction moratorium for 45 days. Explains there will be a resurgence or eviction cases. The moratorium would allow relief money to make its way to the hands of renters.

Motion: Carmen Romero moves to send the letter to the Governor requesting he consider an extended statewide eviction moratorium for 45 days. Paul Bery seconded.

Ayes: Paul Berry, Karina Kline-Gabel, C. Alexander Guzmán, Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Juan Espinoza, Carmen Romero, Melody Gonzales, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Motion passes

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Motion passes

Closing remarks (Sec. Kelly Thomasson) 1:08 PM

Sec. Thomasson greeted the Board and expressed appreciation for the engagement during the pandemic.

Motion: Aida Pacheco motions to adjourn the meeting. Vivian Sanchez-Jones seconded.

Ayes: Paul Berry, Karina Kline-Gabel, C. Alexander Guzmán, Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Juan Espinoza, Carmen Romero, Melody Gonzales, Walewska Watkins

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Motion passes

Meeting Adjourned 1:23 PM