

**Legislative Coordinating Commission
Ethnic Heritage and New Americans Working Group
Friday, August 8, 2008
11:00 AM
Room 107, State Capitol**

PRESENT

Rep. Paul Gardner
Rep. Rod Hamilton
Sen. Patricia Torres Ray
Sen. Joe Gimse
Dr. Bruce Corrie
Gloria Contreras-Edin
John Keller
John Poupart
Joe Swedberg
Steve Waters (designate for Dr. Peter Sadowski)

Sen. Torres Ray called the meeting to order at 11:10 am. A quorum was present.

Introductions:

Members of the Working Group introduced themselves.

Review/Approve Minutes:

Ms. Contreras-Edin requested the minutes reflect that she volunteered to serve on the Policy Subcommittee. Dr. Corrie requested inserting the questions asked of Tom Gillaspay, the State Demographer, regarding specific data also be added to the minutes. Rep. Gardner moved to adopt the minutes as corrected. Rep. Hamilton seconded the motion. **THE MOTION PREVAILED.**

Review Working Group Member Objectives:

Members reviewed and discussed the Working Group member objectives. Mr. Poupart requested adding an objective to look at past trends and demographic shifts among the populations.

Sen. Torres Ray introduced the next portion of the agenda, reviewing reports regarding immigration in Minnesota, to discuss in conjunction with the member objectives. Sen. Torres Ray pointed out that in reviewing the member objectives prior to the meeting, it was discovered that many reports have been completed relating to specific objectives. She explained that staff had compiled some of the reports for member review. The reports include: Immigration in Minnesota, Discovering Common Ground completed by the Minneapolis Foundation; Turn of the Century, Minnesota's Population in 1900 and Today completed by the State Demographic Center; Embracing Immigration completed by the Center for Human Rights; The New American Collaborative and Speaking For Themselves completed by the Wilder Foundation; and Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Equity completed by the Organizing Apprenticeship Project.

Member discussion ensued regarding the member objectives. Discussion included adding the perspectives of American Indians and African Americans to the dialogue; reviewing and sharing best practices; developing policies to become a global competitor by attracting “ethnic capital” to the state; looking at public private collaborations; and reframing the issue from one of deficit to opportunities.

Members then discussed the work of the subcommittees. Rep. Hamilton stated it would be beneficial for the Policy Subcommittee to meet after the Business Subcommittee and Cultural Heritage Subcommittee have addressed the issues. Since the Policy Subcommittee will not be meeting until later, Ms. Contreras-Edin and Rep. Hamilton volunteered to serve on the Business Subcommittee.

Ms. Contreras-Edin pointed out the Working Group is set to expire January 1, 2009 and inquired whether there would be an extension of the Working Group. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Keller acknowledged representatives of the state’s minority councils were in attendance. Sen. Torres Ray noted the representatives of the minority councils have been invited to attend the meetings on an ongoing basis to provide information, assistance and input to the Working Group. Rogelio Munoz Jr., Executive Director of the Chicano Latino Affairs Council; Lester Collins, Director of the Council on Black Minnesotans; Annamarie Hill, Executive Director of Indian Affairs Council; and Roger Banks, Policy and Research Analyst for the Council on Black Minnesotans, each introduced themselves and briefly addressed the Working Group.

Group Discussion/Next Steps

Mr. Keller pointed out there are important steps that need to be taken such as extending the Working Group beyond January 1, 2009 and establishing a structured meeting schedule. Finally, Mr. Keller suggested inviting similar state based commissions from Iowa and Illinois to provide the Working Group with best practice recommendations.

Members then discussed future meetings of the Working Group. It was decided the Working Group would meet every other month and the subcommittees would meet on the alternate months or at the call of the chair.

Rep. Hamilton requested one individual from each subcommittee serve as chair. Ms. Contreras-Edin volunteered to chair the Business Subcommittee and Rep. Gardner volunteered to chair the Cultural Heritage Subcommittee. Staff will assist the subcommittees in scheduling their meetings. Rep. Hamilton stated the entire Working Group will meet in the middle of September.

In regards to the member objectives, it was decided the Business Subcommittee and Cultural Heritage Subcommittee would review the objectives at their first meetings and determine two to four objectives to bring before the entire Working Group.

Mr. Keller stated he would complete best practices work relating to the Illinois and Iowa commissions prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Keller then proposed extending the Working Group at least six months beyond January of 2009 and adding members to the Working Group that are currently not

represented. Mr. Keller stated he would work with Legislative Coordinating Commission on the extension of the Working Group.

Discussion ensued regarding open meeting laws and the possibility of meeting in different communities throughout the state. Rep. Hamilton stated he and Sen. Torres Ray would provide information to the Working Group regarding open meeting laws.

There being no further business Sen. Torres Ray adjourned the meeting of the Ethnic Heritage and New American Working Group at 1:04 pm.

Senator Patricia Torres Ray, Co-Chair

Representative Rod Hamilton, Co-Chair