

**Legislative Coordinating Commission
Ethnic Heritage and New Americans Working Group
Thursday, September 18, 2008
Room: 5 State Office Building**

Present:

Rep. Paul Gardner
Rep. Rod Hamilton
Sen. Patricia Torres Ray
Dr. Bruce Corrie
Gloria Contreras-Edin
John Keller
John Poupart
Dr. Peter Sadowski
Joe Swedberg

Excused:

Sen. Joe Gimse

Rep. Rod Hamilton called the meeting of the Ethnic Heritage and New Americans Working Group to order at 9:09 am. A quorum was present.

Review/Approve Minutes

In regards to the portion of the minutes that state “It was decided the Working Group would meet every other month and the subcommittees would meet on the alternate months”, John Keller moved to add the clause “or as called by the chair”. John Poupart seconded the motion. **THE MOTION PREVAILED.**

Dr. Peter Sadowski moved approval of the August 8, 2008 minutes as amended. Mr. Keller seconded the motion. **THE MOTION PREVAILED.**

Update/ Overview on Business Subcommittee

Gloria Contreras-Edin updated the Working Group on the first meeting of the Business Subcommittee. She explained the Subcommittee decided to focus its efforts on economic arguments supportive of rational immigration and through such arguments change public perception and inform the Legislature.

Ms. Contreras-Edin then reviewed possible activities discussed by the Subcommittee, which include: contacting public relations firms to provide advice on creating a message; collecting data related to immigration through polling and existing material; submitting a budget request to the Legislature for activities; creating a purpose statement to assist with the possible extension of the Working Group; and developing partnerships with business and trade associations as well as other groups interested in workforce development. Member discussion ensued regarding the scope and activities of the Business Subcommittee.

Iowa and Illinois Commissions Update

Mr. Keller informed the Working Group that sufficient funds were available to bring in one or two speakers from the Iowa and Illinois Commissions.

Mr. Keller then gave an overview of the Illinois Commission. He explained the Illinois Office of New Americans was created through a gubernatorial executive order. Mr. Keller pointed out four entities were created to address how Illinois can assist new Americans. They are: Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy; New Americans Immigrant Policy Council; Public-private State Task Force and the National Advisory Council. Mr. Keller noted it would be a great benefit for the Working Group to bring in Illinois representatives to describe their successes and how they were able to overcome challenges.

Mr. Keller stated that he will work with both the Iowa and Illinois Commissions to coordinate their visit with the Working Group.

Update on Working Group Extension

Mr. Keller explained there was a possible solution to the disconnect between the expiration date in statute versus the expiration date adopted by the Legislative Coordinating Commission. Mr. Keller informed members that the Working Group could request an extension from the LCC to the expiration date listed in statute. Mr. Keller then recommended the original bill authors be contacted to see if they are interested in extending the end date of the statute.

Mr. Keller moved to request the LCC extend the expiration date for the Ethnic Heritage and New American Working Group to match the expiration date in statute of June 30th 2009. Sen. Torres Ray seconded the motion. **THE MOTION PREVAILED.**

Mr. Keller stated he would meet with the original bill authors to discuss the possible extension of the Working Group.

Open Meeting Laws

Greg Hubinger, Director of the Legislative Coordinating Commission, addressed the Working Group regarding open meeting laws as well as the possibility of holding meetings outside the Capitol Complex. Mr. Hubinger stated the Working Group is able to meet outside the Capitol Complex and the LCC will provide financial support for such meetings.

In regards to open meeting laws, Mr. Hubinger noted that posting meeting notices is sufficient for compliance to the open meeting law. Mr. Hubinger also pointed out that if there is a quorum of members the meeting must be public.

Members then discussed the process of scheduling meetings throughout the state. It was decided to form a Subcommittee to identify locations for possible field meetings. Mr. Poupart and Ms. Contreras-Edin agreed to co-chair the Subcommittee.

Other Business

There being no further business Rep. Hamilton adjourned the meeting at 10:27 am.