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OHIO COMMISSION ON HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS

Ohio Latino Affairs: Advise. Connect. Build.

Director's Report

Hamilton & Butler Counties Latino Community Meeting of 1 September 2007 ~ Post-Immigration Raid

Special Report to the Office of the Governor Ted Strickland



Executive Summary

After an immigration raid in Southwest Ohio on 28 August 2007, the Office of the Governor contacted the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs to request assistance in its outreach efforts to Hispanic community organizations.

The role of the Commission was very specific as it relates to its statutory mandates to work with private sector not-for-profit community organizations, and to advise policy makers at all levels of state and local government. The Commission was to:

1. Disseminate vital agency contact information to key community organizations
2. Help mobilize private sector not-for-profit agencies in response to the humanitarian crisis
3. Gather information for the Office of the Governor in the form of a report

The Commission does not seek to get involved in immigration policy or politics, as these are under the purview of the federal government and outside the statutory mandate of the Commission.

The on-going role of the Commission, if any, may include assisting community organizations in the development of a disaster recovery plan, and to continue fulfilling its mandated role as a liaison between policymakers and local community organizations.

Background

On Tuesday, 28 August 2007, the Immigration & Customs Enforcement agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security conducted an immigration raid on Koch Foods. The raid consequently resulted in a round-up of undocumented workers from primarily Latin American countries living in Southwest Ohio. Under the leadership of the Office of the Governor, various state agencies were represented in a de-facto interagency task force at the processing site to help mitigate the humanitarian crisis created by the immigration raid.

The following day, the Director of the Office of Hispanic/Latino Affairs was invited to a debriefing session conducted with the agency representatives also in attendance. Concerns were raised, specifically that households in Southwest Ohio had lost their primary sources of income, and that minor children had lost family and parental support. In the case of US citizens affected by the raids, public agencies would have humanitarian assistance available. In other cases, such as with undocumented immigrants, humanitarian assistance would be unavailable from public sector entities. Regardless, it was going to be critical to ensure a flow of information about services, resources, and advocacy groups to the affected families.

The Director asserted that it would be nearly impossible for public agencies to reach the families of the detainees directly. Key community organizations with existing relationships would be the best conduit of information regarding such assistance. In addition, it was determined that humanitarian efforts would have to be taken over by private sector groups in circumstances where such assistance was not available from state agencies due to immigration-related eligibility issues.

During the meeting, the Director of the Office of Hispanic/Latino Affairs was charged with a request to help disseminate critical information to Hispanic community organizations in Hamilton & Butler counties.



Meeting of 1 September 2007

Beginning immediately after the debriefing session in the Office of the Governor, the Director began preparing for a Saturday morning community meeting in Cincinnati. The Director secured assistance from Michael Beck, vice president of the Cincinnati chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and publisher of MidwestLatino.com. Mr. Beck reserved space donated by *Su Casa Hispanic Ministries* of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Communicating largely via e-mail, the Director began publicizing the community meeting to local Hispanic community organizations and leaders.

The meeting's objective was three-fold: to disseminate key contact information regarding services available from public agencies, to assist in coordinating the mobilization of private sector not-for-profit agencies, and to gather feedback from key community members and organizations for the Office of the Governor and the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. The Director contracted a well-known firm respected in the Latino community, Herrera & Associates, to provide mediation and meeting facilitation services for the event.

As of Friday, 31 August 2007, the Office of Hispanic/Latino Affairs projected an attendance of approximately 20 people representing 4-5 different organizations.

The meeting of 1 September 2007 was kicked-off by V. Anthony Simms-Howell, a member of the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs from Cincinnati. Commissioner Simms-

Howell, an active member of the Latino community, was able to successfully start the meeting with over 50 participants representing nearly two dozen different organizations. Family members of detainees from the immigration raid were also in attendance, as were representatives of the media including EscapeLatino.com and the Cincinnati Enquirer.

After allowing all the participants to introduce themselves, Commissioner Simms-Howell introduced Director Escudero and Mr. Ruben Herrera. The Director offered a narrative of the events leading to the meeting that morning, explained the role of the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, and the role of Mr. Herrera. The Commissioner then introduced Ms. Donna Lang of Butler County Children's Services to describe her perspective and observations from the raid's aftermath. Ms. Lang was a part of the de-facto task force on Tuesday, 28 August.

The meeting itself lasted well over two hours. Many questions were asked by community members, and the issues were well fleshed-out by the participants at the meeting. Finally, the participants began to develop an action plan of their own, facilitated by Mr. Herrera & Commissioner Simms-Howell.

Community Concerns

The concerns of the participants can best be organized into three categories, urgent matters, delegation of duties, and long-term issues.

Urgent Matters

Those concerns identified by the meeting participants as requiring immediate attention by community organizations and leaders are:



<i>Issue</i>	<i>Details</i>
Calling cards	Detainees are only permitted to make calls to family using calling cards purchased with cash at the detention centers. In other words, donated calling cards are useless. Donated cash can be used to pay for calling cards at the detention centers.
Food, formula & diapers	Families of detainees, especially those who lost their income-earners as a consequence of the raids, may experience immediate shortages in supplies of food, baby formula, and diapers.
Translators & interpreters	An ongoing need for translation & interpretation services is identified.
Updates on the status of detainees	So as to help keep families together, it is critical that family members and concerned individuals have the ability to track the movement of detainees by ICE officials.
Human rights	In the few days since the raid, human rights concerns have already begun to surface. According to family members, medical attention to detainees is slow to non-responsive, detainees are forced and coerced into signing "voluntary deportation" documents, and detainees are being treated like hardened criminals.

Urgent Matters *continued...*

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Details</i>
Detainee safety	Detainees – who in most cases are only charged with civil offenses – are being locked in with those charged with far more serious criminal offenses, thereby jeopardizing the safety of detainees.
Medical attention	Questions are raised regarding the availability of prompt medical attention, and the ability of licensed doctors in the community to have access to detainees so as to temporarily augment the resources of the detention centers.
Legal aid & assistance	The combined concerns of human rights, detainee safety, and medical attention leads to the need for affordable, trustworthy, and qualified legal aid to detainees and their families.
Availability of bond money	Because of the loss of livelihood experienced by detainees and their families, the accessibility of bond money for detainees is questionable at best.

In addition to these issues, some urgent questions were raised which require immediate attention. These included:

- Liability of those who offer assistance to undocumented immigrants and/or detainees and their families: “Can someone get in trouble for helping?”
- How do we track the movements and transfers of our family members? “The ICE Friends & Family Line is not a viable option.”
- Who will serve as a “first call” point of contact?

Delegation of Duties

Two organizations made the commitment to serve as a “first call point of contact” for donations, answers, and services. For Hamilton County, Su Casa Hispanic Ministries volunteered for the role of primary contact, and the Butler County Workers’ Center offered to be first contact for those residing north of Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center proposed to establish a bank account for financial contributions.

Besides this key “first point of contact” role, the following commitments were also made:

<i>Need</i>	<i>Organization/Individual</i>
Calling cards	Living Water Ministries
Food, formula & diapers	Catholic Social Services
Translators & interpreters	Santa Maria Community Services and Fernando Alarcon
Legal aid & assistance	LULAC and Jorge Neri
Mental health concerns	Nancy Minson
Medical issues	Dr. Candace Ireton

Local community members provided key information, especially regarding services accessible by Spanish-speakers. A copy of the list is provided as an addendum to this report.

Long-Term Issues

Moving beyond the immediate humanitarian problems instigated by the immigration raid, community organizations and leaders identified some ongoing matters requiring attention and resolution, especially to prepare the community in advance of the next incident.

- Affordable, trustworthy, competent legal assistance
- Development of a community “quick response team”
- Organizing and mobilizing community political action

Key Organizations

Su Casa Hispanic Ministries: (513) 761-1588

Butler County Workers' Center: (513) 737-2327

Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center: (513) 621-5991

Living Water Ministries: (513)

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Phone</i>
Archdiocese of Cincinnati	513-241-7745
Butler County Childrens Services	513-217-2503
Butler County Jobs & Family Services	513-887-4000
Church of Our Saviour Episcopal Church	513-241-1870
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center	513-621-5991
EscapeLatino.com	513-674-8500
First United Methodist Church - Hamilton	513-896-5683
Greater Cincinnati Hispanic/Latino Coalition	
Hamilton County Jobs & Family Services	
Hamilton Living Water Cornerstone UMC	
League of United Latin American Citizens - Butler County Chapter	
League of United Latin American Citizens - Cincinnati Chapter	
Lincoln Heights Health Care Connection	513-255-1873
Margaritas Restaurant	513-721-3147
Mental Health Association of Southwest Ohio	513-287-8541
Middletown City Schools	513-217-2722
Santa Maria Community Services	513-557-2700
Su Casa	513-761-1588
UFCW	
United Methodist Church	513-731-0053



Participants

Thirty-eight participants signed in on the meeting register on 1 September. At least a dozen additional participants did not sign in.

<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Organization</i>
Ancion	Wanda	Cincinnati	Su Casa Hispanic Ministries
Barton	Kenn		First United Methodist Church of Hamilton
Barton	Melody		First United Methodist Church of Hamilton
Bishop	Lauren	Cincinnati	Cincinnati Enquirer
Burlew	Jason	Cincinnati	
D?????	Kathleen	Cincinnati	Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Flores	Astrid	Cincinnati	Margaritas Restaurant
Folgoso	Henry	Middletown	United Methodist Church (UMC)
Gomez	Ligia	Cincinnati	Greater Cincinnati Hispanic/Latino Coalition
Hernandez	Efrain	Fairfield	Pastor
Hernandez	Fela	Fairfield	Pastor
Horvatic	Tim		Hamilton Living Water Cornerstone UMC
Horvatic	Sarah		Hamilton Living Water Cornerstone UMC
Jackson	Paula	Cincinnati	Church of Our Saviour Episcopal Church
Jones	Terri	Cincinnati	Hamilton County JFS
Lang	Donna	Hamilton	Butler County Childrens Services
Lepe-Perkins	Denise	Middletown	Middletown City Schools
Maldonado-Dyer	Maritza	Cincinnati	Greater Cincinnati Hispanic/Latino Coalition
Martinez	Ana	Cincinnati	
Martinez	Ricardo	Cincinnati	
Mayweather	Yolanda	Middletown	
Minnich	Vicky	Cincinnati	Lincoln Heights Health Care Connection
Minson	Nancy		Mental Health Association of Southwest Ohio
Mora-Mowry	Lorena		EscapeLatino.com
Moyano-Kleckner	Sofia	Cincinnati	
Neri	Jorge	Hamilton	LULAC & UFCW1099
Newman	Charity	Hamilton	Butler County JFS
Recalde	Eustaquio	Hamilton	Hamilton Living Water Cornerstone UMC
Recalde	Claudine	Hamilton	Hamilton Living Water Cornerstone UMC
Rico-Alarcon	Fernando	Cincinnati	Santa Maria Community Services
Rojas-Guyler	Liliana	West Chester	
Saliceti	Nilsa	Cincinnati	United Methodist Church
Saliceti	Tony	Cincinnati	United Methodist Church
Sherman	Donna	Cincinnati	Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center
Simms-Howell	V.Anthony	Cincinnati	Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Singer	Margaret	Cincinnati	Su Casa Hispanic Ministries
Villalpando	Guadalupe	Columbus	United Methodist Church
Watson	Ashton	Hamilton	Butler County JFS



Submitted by Ezra C. Escudero, OCHLA Director, 7 September 2007