



AUGUST 2019

COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT



ICLA

Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs

Originally established as the governor's Spanish-speaking task force through legislative action on April 1974. At the time its primary mission was to study the issues facing Spanish-speaking persons. The Task Force produced a report titled "Conóceme en Iowa".

Two years later on July 1, 1976, the Sixty-sixth General Assembly approved and Governor Robert Ray signed into law the Spanish-Speaking People's Commission. Ten years later, in 1986, during an overall reorganization of state government the Iowa Department of Human Rights was formed, under which was placed the Spanish-Speaking People's Commission. In 1990, the Commission and the Division were renamed Latino Affairs.

During the 2011 reorganization the Division of Latino Affairs was renamed again as the Office of Latino affairs.

DUTIES UNDER IOWA CODE

Like all statewide boards and commissions, the Latino Affairs Commission is balanced for gender and political affiliation and it's made up of seven Governor-appointed community members who volunteer their time to represent the Latino community in Iowa. According to Iowa Section Code Section 216A.15, the Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs has the following duties:

- Study the opportunities for and changing needs of the Latino population of this state.
- Serve as liaison between the office and the public, sharing information and gathering constituency input.
- Recommend to the board for adoption rules pursuant to chapter 17A as it deems necessary for the commission and office.
- Recommend to the department director policies and programs for the office.
- Establish advisory committees, work groups, or other coalitions as appropriate.

IOWA LATINO HALL OF FAME

On Saturday, October 20, 2019 five Iowans were inducted into the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame.

2018 HONOREES

- Ernest M. Rodriguez, Bettendorf, IA
- Salvador (Chavo) J. Lopez, Davenport, IA
- Warren Morrow (posthumous), Des Moines, IA
- The First recipient of the Iowa Latinx Youth Leadership Award: Vanessa Espinoza, Columbus Junction, IA
- The first recipient of the Iowa Latino Ambassador award for Equity and Justice: Governor Robert D. Ray (posthumous), Des Moines, IA. From October 20, 2018, this will be the Robert D. Ray Award for Equity & Justice.



WHY A LATINO HALL OF FAME?

Many outstanding Latinos/as helped shape Iowa and many strong Latino leaders continue to contribute their talents and skills to improve the quality of life in this state. To recognize and honor these achievers and to provide visible examples for tomorrow's Latino leaders, the Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs established the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame in 2017 with the goal of ensuring that the efforts of Latino leaders are honorably recognized and celebrated.

Among the many strong Latino leaders are political and social activists, scientists, educators, writers and spiritual and community leaders. They represent the Latinos who have helped shape Iowa, the United States, and the world. Their induction into the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame will enhance the visibility of their contributions to their work, communities, and the status of Latinos in Iowa.

COMMISSION LETTER TO CONGRESS ABOUT DACA AND TPS

ICLA

Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs

On Tuesday, September 5, 2017, President Donald Trump ordered the termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, unless Congress comes up with a potential replacement. The DACA was established by President Barack Obama in 2012 and allowed eligible immigrant youth who came to the United States as minors to receive a period of deferred action from deportation and a work permit, subject to renewal after two years.

President Trump's decision to rescind the DACA will have drastic and devastating consequences for approximately 800,000 young people referred to as "Dreamers", as well as our economy and our communities. DACA has given Dreamers the chance to work, obtain driver's licenses, go to school, and be actively involved in their communities without fear of deportation. It has given many Dreamers the opportunity to serve in the military and to obtain advanced degrees which has given them the skills to obtain employment and make invaluable contributions to the U.S. economy. The Trump Administration has put many of our Latino families in grave danger to be deported from the only country they know and love.

- An average of 1,400 Dreamers will be forced from their jobs every business day for the next two years.
- Every single Dreamer will be subject to deportation, often to countries they do not even remember.
- The U.S. economy will lose billions — \$460.3 billion to be specific — over the next decade.

In many cases, the United States is the only country Dreamers know; to send them back to a country where they don't possess connections in or knowledge of the community is simply a cruel and inhumane act. Punishing people who have grown up as Americans because they were brought here as minors is not the solution to concerns of domestic security and ultimately damages families, communities, and the U.S. economy. As a community, and as a society, we are not morally or economically prepared to send these people away and endanger their future potential and the fabric of their communities.

In support of DACA, the Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs urges the Trump Administration to put in place a program that will protect the rights of not only the Dreamers, but their families. The Commission cannot support a decision that treats our Latino immigrants in such a callous manner; it is against all the values that we believe and live by as Latinos, allies, and most importantly, Iowans. Furthermore, this decision will only divide the country even more and divide Latino families and their communities. Again, we vehemently urge all our elected officials to understand how this decision will impact our communities, our families, and halt economic growth in all corners of the United States of America and act today for a better future for all!

Jeannette Brown, Chair

[Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs](#)

Jeannette@CentroInformativoLatino.org

LATINO DAY ON THE HILL

The Commission held their second Latino Day on the Hill on Thursday, January 25, 2019, reaching their goal of serving as a bridge to connect Iowa's Latino community with the Capitol.

The event was planned and put together by the commission's

legislative committee:

Marlu Abarca, Chair

Cecilia Martinez

Jesus Lizarraga Estrada

Adalberto Castrejon

Sofia Martinez

Alexa Rodriguez



PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Al Éxito

Bright Lights Big Data

Latino Political Network

LULAC Iowa

LUNA

New Leaders

Council



COMMUNITY SPONSORS

BLK & Bold Specialty Beverage

El Fogón

Ritual Cafe



2019 COMMISSION'S LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS



ICLA

Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs

2019 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase the budget for the Iowa Department of Human Rights' Division of Community Advocacy and Services (CAS).

The CAS division carries out the important work of building resourcefulness among Iowans by:

- Building capacity for people to become agents of change in their communities.
- Helping with navigation for those who need access to services.
- Creating resourcefulness and improving systems for youth through a focus on developing non-traditional leaders.
- Elevating issues, ideas, cultures, and contributions to improving connection among all Iowans.

The Commission on Latino Affairs relies on the Iowa Department of Human Rights staff to carry out much of the work identified by the Commission. Increasing the DHR budget would preserve programs and services that benefit our most vulnerable populations.

2. Provide driver's licenses for all residents of Iowa, regardless of immigration status.

Providing driver licenses for all Iowa residents, regardless of immigration status, ensures public safety. Driver licenses contain addresses and other identifiable information, helps drivers understand the rules and responsibilities of the road through a proficiency examination, and reduces the number of uninsured motorists because drivers are more likely to register their vehicle and obtain adequate insurance. Having a driver's license allows residents to engage in Iowa's economic, social and cultural life.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Latino Affairs at 515-281-4080 or Sonia.Reyes-Snyder@iowa.gov

The Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs is a governor-appointed Commission comprised of public members who:

- Study opportunities and changing needs of the Latino population of this state;
- Serve as a liaison between the Department and the public;
- Recommend legislative and executive action to the General Assembly and Governor;
- Establish advisory committees, work groups of other coalitions to achieve goals.

2019 COMMISSIONERS

Jeannette Brown, Chair
Des Moines, Iowa

Marlu Abarca, Vice Chair
Des Moines, Iowa

Lorena Gingerich, Secretary
West Branch, Iowa

Alfonzo Perez
Ankeny, Iowa

Juan Rodriguez
Des Moines, Iowa

San Wong, Director
Iowa Department of Human
Rights
Ex-Officio

OFFICE OF LATINO AFFAIRS

Sonia Reyes-Snyder



IOWA QUEER COMMUNITIES OF COLOR COALITION - IQCC

The commission established this coalition in March, 2019 with the intent to bridge the gap of services and initiatives for LGBTQ communities of color in Iowa.

Mission: The Iowa Queer Communities of Color's mission is to use an intersectional lens to address the inequity of services, lack of support and space, socioeconomic disparities, and institutional racism experienced by our communities through education, advocacy, and intentional inclusivity and organizing.

Vision: Queer Communities of color in Iowa will be empowered to take collective action resulting in social change to obtain holistic wellness, equity and interpersonal growth.

MEMBERS:

Alex H. Jimenez

Eugenia Kendall

Jeanina Messerly

Marlu Abarca, Commission Vice-Chair

Ric Tennenbaum

Sonia Reyes-Snyder, Secretary

Buffy Jamison, Co-Chair

Gabby Guerra Ceron, Co-Chair

Karen McKey

Ramon Calzada

Olivia Samples



ASSOCIATION OF IOWA LATINX PROFESSIONALS

PILA's mission is to support and empower Iowa's Latinx professionals by creating an inclusive space and providing opportunities for Self-Advocacy, Professional Development, Networking, and Connections to Iowa's Employers. It was established in 2018.

INITIATIVES

NETWORKING

Partnerships with existing organizations that serve professionals

WEBINAR SERIES

PILA facilitates webinars, on the second Monday of each month about topics identified by members.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Monthly Newsletter provides employment and professional development opportunities for Latinx professionals in the state.

CULTURAL SPECIFIC PROGRAMING

Networking events around the state with local Latinx professionals.

2018 PILA EVENTS

Networking Events Around the State



Des Moines

Ottumwa



Quad Cities

2019 PILA EVENTS



Latinx Forum

Poetry Jam

Networking Event



Multicultural Reception



OUTREACH IN THE PARK

The commission participated in the Iowa Cubs' Latino night, doing outreach to Latino families.



COMMISSION STATEMENT AGAINST IOWA DETENTION CENTERS FOR CHILDREN DETAINED AT THE BORDER



ICLA

Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs

Statement on Detention Centers in Iowa

The Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs opposes the opening of detention centers in Iowa. Placing children that have been separated from their relatives in youth homes, foster care or in shelters that become detention centers are not only inhumane and costly practices, but they are also cruel.

Our opposition stems from concern about an Iowa non-profit agency that was willing to open two detention centers in our state. Iowa doesn't have enough bilingual and bicultural professionals to provide the needed services that traumatized detained children need if they were to be moved to this state. We know that family detention is harmful; it has in fact resulted in the deaths of several children.

There are also recent reports of unsafe environments where children lack access to medical care and other basic needs while being detained for long periods of time. This results in physical harm and long-term trauma.

As a governor appointed commission, our number one fundamental objective is to protect families; the practices and services that are in place right now do not do that, and we urge the State of Iowa and its residents to reject such measures in order to protect the lives of all families.

The commission proposes that instead of detention centers, foster care and youth homes, Iowa comes together to support Iowa's sponsors in the process of reuniting with their detained children. This is a long and daunting process of filling out many government forms, proving relationship to the children, getting fingerprinted, and more.

The Commission will establish a taskforce with community partners around the state to support Iowa sponsors in this process.

If you have any questions please contact the
Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs at 515-281-4080
Sonia.Reyes-Snyder@iowa.gov

The Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs is a governor-appointed Commission comprised of public members who:

Study opportunities and changing needs of the Latino population of this state;

Serve as a liaison between the Department and the public;

Recommend legislative and executive action to the General Assembly and Governor;

Establish advisory committees, work groups of other coalitions to achieve goals.

2019 Commission Members

Jeannette Brown, Chair
Polk County, Iowa

Marlu Abarca, Vice Chair
Polk County, Iowa

Lorena Gingerich, Secretary
Cedar County, Iowa

Caleb Knutson
Hardin County, Iowa

Gilbert Nunez
Linn County, Iowa

Al Perez
Polk County, Iowa

Valerie Nolte
Warren County, Iowa

San Wong, Director
Iowa Department of Human Rights
Ex-Officio

Office of Latino Affairs
Sonia Reyes-Snyder

TASK FORCE: ASSISTING IOWA SPONSORS THROUGH THE PROCESS OF GETTING THEIR CHILDREN WHO ARE DETAINED AT THE BORDER.



Representatives from over 50 organizations met on August 20, 2019 to plan on how to help Iowa sponsors through the process of getting their children that have been detained at the border, out of detention centers from around the country.

COMMISSIONERS



Marlu Abarca
Vice-Chair



Valerie Nolte



Jeannette Brown
Chair



Gilbert Nuñez



Lorena Gingerich
Secretary



Alfonso Perez



Caleb Knutson

OFFICE OF LATINO AFFAIRS

Sonia Reyes-Snyder

Lucas State Office Building 321 E 12th Street | Des Moines, IA 50319

Office 515.281.4080 | Fax 515.242.6119

Sonia.Reyes-Snyder@iowa.gov | <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/la>