



LATIN AMERICAN ADVISORY GROUP

Isiah Leggett

County Executive

Timothy L. Firestine

Chief Administrative Officer

December 11, 2012

Honorable Isiah Leggett
101 Monroe St. 2nd floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett,

Thank you for your continued interest and support for the Latino community of Montgomery County. Over the past decade, Montgomery County's Latino population grew at the fastest pace (64%), making us the second largest population in the county at 17.5%. Our local and national election results proved that Latino interests can have a dynamic impact on policy directions affecting the needs of a broad swath of the population - well beyond our own, as seen in Maryland's Dream Act. Finally, Latinos in Montgomery County are committed, motivated and upwardly mobile - - well worth the continued investment in equal opportunities for employment, education, health and overall well-being.

In accordance with our mandate to advise you on matters relating to the Latino Community, we recommend that you to promote the following priorities:

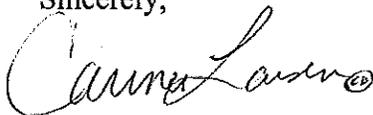
- **Fund community organizations, in particular those working with the Maryland Dream Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) applicants.** We urge you to increase County resources to community based organizations including Casa de Maryland, Identity, Liberty's Promise, and Community Bridges. In addition to assisting Dreamers and DACA applicants, these organizations complement, supplement and leverage the health, education and mentoring work done by County agencies and programs.
- **Vigorous implementation of your Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Executive Order No. 046-10.** Cultural and linguistically competent (CLC) services are critical, particularly to those individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). County departments and agencies, especially those with extensive, direct client contact, should

- implement the LEP Executive Order and make the provision of CLC services a priority. Key departments should allocate sufficient funding to pay for bilingual staff, interpretation services, translation needs and LEP outreach.
- **Suitable funding and implementation of the Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP).** To help Latino small business owners adversely impacted by the Wheaton Redevelopment Project, the SBAP must reflect the reality of such businesses. We are working with the Mid-County Regional Director, community groups and small business groups to ensure that SBAP provides attainable and practical solutions for these affected businesses. Realistic eligibility criteria for loans and grants will be crucial; we will provide our advice on the draft regulations as soon as they are available. For now, we urge you to continue the on-going technical support, to call for adequate funding for the SBAP, and to consult with us on sufficient appropriation targets.
- **MCPD Community Outreach Funds and Community Services Unit (CSU).** MCPD should reestablish its Community Services Unit as an organizational component directly reporting to the Chief and increase funds for community outreach with the Latino Community. The CSU can work with community based organizations and develop important connections with diverse neighborhoods. MCPD should increase staff designated to speak with community groups in Spanish, conduct outreach events, and work with neighbors to increase the trust and cooperation with Latino residents. In addition, broader MCPD media outreach is needed such as more airtime on TV and radio shows as well as increased Spanish language outreach materials.

We were inspired by your recent comments that “as goes Montgomery County, so goes the State of Maryland” and we agree that Montgomery County can lead the United States in providing equal opportunities and treatment of Latinos and other underserved groups.

We look forward to ongoing discussions with you regarding these issues and how they may best be addressed. Thank you for your dedication and service to Montgomery County; it is an honor to work with you.

Sincerely,



Carmen Ortiz Larsen



Teresa Chapa

Co-chairs of the County Executive’s Latin American Advisory Group

Cc:

Members of the Latin American Advisory Group

Bruce Adams, Director of the Office of Community Partnerships

Jennifer Hughes, Director of the Office of Management and Budget

Tim Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer