



Inajo Davis Chappell
Chairwoman

Jeff Hastings
Member

Eben O. (Sandy) McNair, IV
Member

Deborah Sutherland
Member

Pat McDonald
Director

Spanish- Language Advisory Board Agenda

January 07, 2013
5:00 PM
Esperanza Inc Board Room
3104 Clark Ave
Cleveland, 44109

Bilingual Coordinator: Ivelisse Roig
Meeting facilitator: Magda Gómez

I. Attendance

Present:

Dennis Anderson
Ron Berger
Pablo Castro III

Blanca Figueroa
Magda Gómez

Not Present:

Marilyn Bagley
Luis Gómez
Adrian Maldonado

Javier Morales-Ortíz
Dharma Valentín

Welcome:

Henry Curtis- Manager of the Poll Worker Department
Juan Crespo Molina- Director of the Hispanic Alliance
Isabel Gálvez- Comunidad Latina-Yahoo Group Moderator
Pat McDonald- Cuyahoga County Board of Elections Interim Director

II. Review and Approval of the Minutes from September 17, 2012 meeting

The motion was moved by Ron Berger and seconded by Ivelisse Roig. Minutes for September 17, 2012 meeting were approved.



III. *Old Business & Updates:*

The Advisory Board Co-Chair Magda Gomez opened the meeting discussion by talking about Latino voter turnout. Gómez asked Dennis Anderson, Community Outreach Manager about how they can obtain voter turnout information in the bilingual precincts. Anderson mentioned that he can pull the voter history from the bilingual precincts that would include name, address, ward and precinct. Juan Crespo-Molina; Hispanic Alliance Director asked if there is a possibility to do a data comparison of who was registered to vote vs. who voted. Dennis will make sure that the Advisory Board gets the data requested from the voter history.

- **Bilingual Election Program Update:**

The Bilingual Coordinator provided a brief summary of the bilingual requirements from the November 06, 2012 Presidential Election. The report stated that The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections has continued to provide the Spanish-language election materials to Limited English Proficient voters. The Community Outreach Department and Poll Worker Department attended thirteen (13) community events from June through November of 2012. The CCBOE asked Hispanic and non-Hispanic partners to distribute bilingual voter information to their clients and constituents via e-mail, newsletters, E-newsletters, websites, at their offices, and when conducting outreach events. A sampling of the partners' outreach assistance includes: Vocero Latino, City of Cleveland, Amigas Unidas Program, Spanish-Language Advisory Board members, Comunidad Latina.

The CCBOE hired two (2) bilingual temporary employees in the Poll Worker Department. 78 precincts of 1,063 precincts in this election exceeded 100 or more Hispanic surnamed voters. The CCBOE offered thirteen (13) specialized bilingual poll worker training sessions for the bilingual poll workers hired in the 78 precincts. Seven (7) of these bilingual trainings were 5.5 hours for new bilingual poll workers and six (6) refresher classes of 3.5 hours for returning bilingual poll workers. These sessions were conducted from September to October. The regular poll worker training and the specialized Spanish assistance training were combined into a one-day class. A regular trainer conducted the regular poll worker training portion, and at the end the Bilingual Coordinator facilitated the specialized Spanish assistance requirements segment. This segment was presented mostly in Spanish to provide bilingual poll workers with both the knowledge and literacy to help the Cuyahoga County Spanish speaking voters. A total of one hundred seven (107) bilingual poll workers served on Election Day.

The CCBOE received complaints from voters via e-mail, phone, mail, and from documentation by precinct poll workers. From July 2012 to December 2012, the CCBOE received three (3) e-mails via the CCBOE website. The Director's office received one (1) e-mail. The Registration Department received three hundred eighty seven (387) phone calls from September-November 6, 2012 and the Bilingual office received one (1) voice message. Poll workers in five (5) precincts documented voter complaints about the bilingual ballots. The most common complaint was that the ballot format was very confusing. They suggested having separate ballots and to provide the Spanish version upon request.

The Spanish Language Assistance Hotline had a total of five (5) Spanish speaking phone operators on Election Day. The hotline received one hundred seventeen (117) calls; fifty (50) calls were from English speaking voters or poll workers and sixty seven (67) calls were from Spanish-speaking voters.

The total amount on bilingual additional costs for November 6th, 2012 Presidential General Election was: \$402,565.75

IV. *New Business:*

- **Spanish Language Advisory Board Recommendations Summary:**

The Spanish Language Advisory members were looking for direction from the Interim Director Pat McDonald on how to submit their recommendations. According to section E of the Consent Decree Agreement on page 11; paragraph 23 “If the BOE or the Director decides not to implement an Advisory Group recommendation, if any, or the BOE cannot reach to a consensus regarding such recommendation, the BOE or the Director shall provide the Advisory Group with a statement of the reason (s) rejecting such recommendation, which should be recorded on or attached to the Advisory Group’s minutes.” Currently the recommendations are recorded in the meeting minutes, and then the Bilingual Coordinator submits them to the Director and posts them online. The Spanish-Language Advisory Board members would like to have an effective recommendation process. They think it’s important that the CCBOE notifies them in writing about any recommendation decision; followed with an implementation procedure if recommendations are accepted. The Interim Director suggested the Chairwomen Magda Gómez and Bilingual Coordinator to get together and come up with a recommendations proposal for submission and implementation.

- **Bilingual Election Program Transition Plan for after March 30th of 2014:**

According to the consent decree section G page 12, paragraph 28; the agreement between the DOJ and the CCBOE will expired on March 30, 2014. Advisory Board members are being proactive and would like to start developing a transitional action plan that will secure the continuance of the current Spanish services thereafter the decree expires. Interim Director Pat McDonald asked advisory members about what kind of impact the Bilingual Program has had in the Hispanic community? Blanca Figueroa who is the Director of Operations at the May Dugan Center shared her experience on how no one before had ever requested voting information in Spanish or English and now she’s been solicited for that kind of information and services. Other members mentioned the impact in the faith based community, on how churches had opened up their doors to learn more about the voting process and helped the Spanish Language Advisory Board create awareness about the availability of the Spanish services. Magda Gómez mentioned that on October 19 of 2013 is Hispanic Convención. She also explained that this event happens every three years; and it’s divided in different area teams that focus on Social, Civic, Education and Health. The Spanish Language Advisory Board has worked closely with the Civic involvement and empowerment committee. The following is a list of all the outreach efforts and collaborations made during the last two years by the Spanish-Language Advisory Board.

2011-2012

- Puerto Rican Festival
- Town Hall Meeting at May Dugan Center
- Spanish Language Voter Survey

2012-2013

- Faith Based Rally “Tú Decides”
- Tú Decides Civic Engagement Training
- Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates “How to do voter registration training”
- Get Registered To Vote Rally!
- Candidate and Issues Night

Interim Director Pat McDonald indicated that the CCBOE board members will have to review the Bilingual Program and make a decision. He also stated that the Bilingual Program is costing almost a half of a million dollars to the CCBOE. Co-Chair Pablo Castro pointed the important fact that the Consent Decree Agreement was set to move the Spanish services forward not necessarily to end them once the agreement expires. Interim Director McDonald suggested the Spanish Language Advisory Board to wait until the new Director and Deputy Director are appointed. He recommends and request a meeting sometime after June 2013, so they can

be settled in their new job positions and aware of the details of DOJ Agreement and the functions of the Spanish-Language Advisory Board along with its goals and mission for CCBOE.

V. *Subcommittees*

- **Bilingual Poll Workers Recruitment:**

Bilingual Coordinator read the three goals provided by Bilingual Poll Worker Subcommittee Chair Blanca Figueroa. One of the subcommittee's goals is for Advisory Board members to participate in one of the upcoming elections as a Poll Worker to learn and understand the electoral process; especially to new members. To hire a Bilingual Trainer to incorporate both languages and provide a bilingual (English and Spanish) learning experience throughout the entire training class. Manager of Poll Worker Department, Henry Curtis stated that the training is not going to change that it will remain the way it is right now. He stated that Poll Workers should know English first and then Spanish. Bilingual Coordinator explained that having a bilingual class will not alter any rules or regulations on how to be a poll worker; however it is important that poll workers become familiar with election terms and situations in both languages. Some poll worker's first language is English and for others is Spanish. This is about a cognitive learning process. The Director of Hispanic Alliance supported the Coordinator's rationale and added that it is important to take in consideration persons whose first language, or language of choice, is not English or were raised with different cultural values. Cultural sensitivity should be considered in order to avoid cultural conflicts or communication misinterpretations, particularly in a learning setting. Henry Curtis reported to the Advisory Board that another area where they need advice is in training attendance. He mentioned that the no show rate for Bilingual poll workers is higher than the Regular Poll Workers. Co-Chair Castro brought up the training incident that happened in the very beginning regarding giving only one 5 minutes break during a 5 hrs class, he stated that Hispanics could take offensive the fact that they can't take a moment to enjoy a good talk while drinking coffee or eating food. It was discussed the fact that among Hispanics, information is passed mostly by word of mouth, and that incident could have had a negative impact throughout the training series and reduced participation. Chairwomen Gómez said that she understands the importance of time and punctuality; however within the Latino community not being on time is a socially accepted behavior. Chairwomen Gómez made clear that is not about permitting the behavior but to have cultural sensitivity about it. This subject has been set for further discussion.

- **Community Outreach and Voter Education:**

The Spanish Language Advisory Board will continue contributing to the CCBOE outreach efforts.

VI. *Misc. News & Closing Remarks*

Chairwomen Gómez announced her intention in continuing her participation as a board member but not as a chair. The SLAB would like to recruit new members. A meeting for March 18 at 5:00 pm has been scheduled to invite new members and to vote on a new directive.

*Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.