

**Spanish-Language Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

January 31, 2011

5:00p.m.

Cuyahoga County Board of Elections

**I. Attendance:**

**a. Present:**

Adrian Maldonado	Jeff Hastings	Trevor McAleer
Luis Cartagena	Inajo Chappell	Henry Curtis
Luis Gomez	Jane Platten	Dennis Anderson
Magda Gomez	Pat McDonald	Nicole Kostura
Yasin Cuevas	Ivelisse Roig	Francisco Santiago

**b. Not Present:**

Natividad Pagán  
Carlos Chinchilla

**II. Overview of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (BOE) agency organization**

- a. Director Jane Platten gave an overview of the BOE. She described how the Advisory Board came to be and highlighted some of the departments that are most impacted by the bilingual requirements.
- b. She briefly detailed what they are working on for the 2011 Election Cycle.
  - i. Ballot Department proofs and handles the bilingual ballots.
  - ii. The Bilingual Coordinator is a newly created position that came from the agreement and is mandated by the Department of Justice (DOJ).
    1. Mainly works on document translation, Spanish-language publicity/educational outreach to the English and Spanish communities, aides in bilingual Poll Worker recruitment, and oversees this Spanish-Language Advisory Board.
  - iii. Information Systems is working to make the BOE website completely bilingual—this is expected to be ready in the coming weeks.
  - iv. Poll Worker Department has 71 precincts that need to have Bilingual Poll Workers.
    1. The 71 precincts were reached due to the DOJ's formula that determines the number of Puerto Rican voters in each precinct based on surnames. (These are predominantly in the Cleveland and Brooklyn area).
      - a. Goal is to get at least one (1) Bilingual Poll Worker per precinct; (In November 2010, approximately 90 were hired).
    2. The Board of Elections also provides a Bilingual Voter Hotline on Election Day.
    3. On Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, BOE hosted a focus group for the Bilingual Poll Workers to determine how it went in the September and November 2010 elections.

- a. Adrian Maldonado asked what issues we had with bilingual Poll Workers (i.e. recruitment, retention, etc).
  - i. We had few problems, but there was an issue in September with getting the Bilingual Poll Workers to show up.
- b. Jane noted that the May 2011 Election may not be intense with Bilingual Poll Workers because Cleveland and Brooklyn are not in the May election.

### III. Advisory Board Duties

- c. Bilingual Coordinator Ivelisse Roig went over the Advisory Board's objectives and duties.
  - i. The main objective points were:
    - 1. Assist the Coordinator and BOE in implementing the Bilingual Elections Program to ensure that effective means are utilized to provide Spanish-Language access to the voting age LEP persons in Cuyahoga County.
    - 2. Provide the Coordinator with comments regarding the accuracy of translations used.
    - 3. Work with Coordinator and provide further outreach to the Puerto Rican residents in Cuyahoga County.
    - 4. The BOE will invite all individuals on the Advisory Board Roster to assist in identifying and recommending qualified bilingual residents who are interested in serving as poll workers.
    - 5. Advisory Board members serve without compensation.
  - ii. Meeting Requirements:
    - 1. Must meet prior to the first county-wide election conducted by the BOE (May 2011) and in the subsequent elections.
      - a. Must meet at least once (1) a month during the four (4) months prior to May 2011 and at least once during the two months after the election.
      - b. Subsequent meetings are to be determined by the Spanish-Language Advisory Board, but must at least meet twice(2) during the six (6) months before the November 2012 General Election and once (1) during the two (2) months after.
      - c. During the period of this agreement, the board must at least meet twice (2) during the six (6) months before the general election and once (1) during the two (2) months after.
    - 2. Coordinator will maintain minutes of all meetings and provide timely copies to the Advisory Board members and Director of the BOE, as well as for any member of the public that requests the minutes.
      - a. The Coordinator will also send notice regarding the time and place of all meetings as soon as possible to the public, as well as members of the Advisory Board.

### III. Summary of what the Board of Elections has already done/accomplished

- a. The Department of Justice (DOJ) came in July of 2010.
  - i. September 2010 Election:
    1. BOE provided Sample Bilingual Ballots in the 71 precincts identified by the DOJ as having 100 or more Hispanic surnamed voters.
    2. Hired Bilingual Poll Workers for the 71 precincts
    3. Translated some of the election material.
  - ii. November 2010 Election:
    1. Had a live Bilingual Ballot in the 71 precincts.
    2. Translated election materials.
    3. Had Federal Observers that reported to the DOJ in various locations.
    4. Provided sample bilingual ballots in all precincts.
    5. Provided a Bilingual Voter Hotline.
      - a. We received 21 calls that were mainly concerning where an individual was able to vote at.
    6. Advertised our Bilingual Program in numerous Hispanic media such as La Prensa.
  - iii. What we expect in May 2011:
    1. We will continue the practices listed above from November.
    2. There will be a Bilingual Ballot in all 1068 precincts in Cuyahoga County.
    3. We will provide at least one (1) Bilingual Poll Worker for any precinct that meets or exceeds the DOJ formula (100+ Hispanic surnamed voters).
    4. We will report the DOJ.

### IV. Advisory Board Member Recruitment and Nominations:

- a. Discussed that we should not limit the Advisory Board members to a specific number just yet.
- b. Magda Gomez suggested that we recruit in the key sectors of the Hispanic Community— Churches, Social Clubs, Social Services, etc.
- c. Adrian Maldonado recommended contacting a professor from Baldwin Wallace College that specializes in Political Science with a focus on Bilingual Election Services.
  - i. He will send Ivelisse his contact information.
- d. Yasin Cuevas offered to share her contacts with different churches in the community, not just Catholic, but also other denominations.
- e. Pat McDonald suggested, and the group decided to keep the recruitment open-ended for the next couple meetings to allow more individuals to attend.
  - i. The present members were encouraged to invite new people to the next meeting.
- f. The Board may look to define size, positions, elect members, etc in the April and/or May meetings.

**V. Meeting Schedule for the May 2011 Election**

- a. The Board is required to meet at least once (1) a month prior to the May 2011 Election.
- b. It was agreed to try to stick to meeting on the last Monday of each month at 5:00p.m.
  - i. Next scheduled meetings are:
    1. Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 5:00p.m.
    2. Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 5:00p.m.
    3. April is TBD due to the Easter Holiday.

**VI. Questions/Open Discussion**

- a. Adrian Maldonado suggested that all members read the Consent Decree between the BOE and the DOJ, if they have not done so already.
- b. It was suggested that members of the Advisory Board are cognizant and keep the BOE/Coordinator aware of Hispanic Community Events and to do more outreach.
  - i. Utilize the Hispanic List-serve
  - ii. Create a Facebook page.
  - iii. Possibly have the BOE host an event called "Mi Voz, Mi Voto".
  - iv. Luis Gomez invited people to attend the Spanish Alliance meetings which are held every third Tuesday of each month from 3:00p.m. to 5:00p.m.

\*Meeting adjourned at 5:42p.m.