OREGON COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS

2013 - 2015 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE, THE GOVERNOR, AND OREGON’S HONORABLE ELECTED OFFICIALS
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February 14, 2015

Dear Legislators, elected officials, and our new governor:

As we celebrate Oregon’s 156th birthday, we see many changes to our state – greater prosperity, greater community, and greater inclusion. The state comes together to celebrate our victories – an author’s recognition throughout the country, our beers and wines and coffees feted across the country, and our science and technology in the pockets and purses and laptops of people in every corner of the world.

Notwithstanding these gifts, we find that we do not always share equally in Oregon’s promise. Hispanic children see great inequalities in educational opportunities and disparate discipline. Women and men and children across our state are victims of human trafficking. Health care access imbalance does not reflect our values of a community-based safety net. But I am grateful to tell you that the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs works hard to identify and correct those inharmonious realities.

We are proud to share this 2013-2014 report with you all. It reflects our commissioners’ hard work for these past two years. I hope you see in this report the passion that the individual commissioners bring to the state of Oregon. I anticipate that you will be impressed by the partnerships that our commissioners have formed with different agencies, educational institutes, and governmental offices to work in tandem to create a better Oregon, a better more inclusive and healthy place for all of us.

As Edmund Burke reminds us, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” And our communities cannot afford for this august commission, to do nothing.

Alberto Moreno
Chair, Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
The Status of Oregon’s Hispanic Community

There are now 500,000 Latinos who live and work in our great state. This population is the 19th largest in the nation, around .09% of all Hispanics in the country. This vibrant community makes meaningful contributions to the state’s economy and are a vital workforce for Oregon.

Unstable Healthcare Access

Approximately 17,600 undocumented children live in Oregon. But they are excluded from healthcare under the Affordable Care Act and Oregon’s own health care reforms. Lack of health insurance means that children are far less likely to see a doctor, prevent disease, manage chronic illness, and treat acute conditions. Instead, it increases childhood illness and mortality, requires unnecessary hospitalization, and household debt.

As expressed best by Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, “Every child in Oregon should have the opportunity for the right start in life, no exceptions. When kids have access to health care and education, we all have a brighter future.”

Unequal Franchisement

But the Pew Research Center also reveals that despite being the 14th largest population share nationally, Hispanics make up only the 20th largest eligible voter population nationally.

Four in ten of Hispanic eligible voters are between 18 and 29 years old, which is higher than the nationwide statistic (33%), higher than all U.S. eligible voters (22%), and Oregon eligible voters (20%).

Disproportionate Education

The Pew Research Center also notes that roughly 19% of Latino eligible voters have not completed high school, which shockingly is over twice the rate of all Oregon’s eligible voters (8%). However, it falls slightly below the nationwide 23% of Hispanics who have not completed high school.

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1 The Oregon Center for Public Policy.
OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

MISSION AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

The mission of the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs ("the Commission") is to work toward economic, social, political and legal equality for Oregon’s diverse Hispanic/Latino population.

The Commission and all the Commissioners serve as advocates for Hispanic/Latino youth, children, and adults, with the goal of success in school, the receipt of equal health and social services, and fair and equitable treatment through the judicial system.

The Commission is authorized by Oregon Revised Statute 185.310 - 185.330 to:

1. Monitor existing programs and legislation designed to meet the needs of Oregon’s Hispanic population.
2. Identify and research problem areas and issues affecting the Hispanic community and recommend actions to the Governor and the Legislative Assembly, including recommendations on legislative programs.
3. Maintain a liaison between the Hispanic community and government entities.
4. Encourage Hispanic representation on state boards and commissions.
5. Hold meetings to conduct its business.

In addition, the Commission:

- Researches and collates data on issues pertinent to the Hispanic community.
- Focuses on a statewide context – from the rural, urban, suburban, and coastal regions—to identify current programs and determine what gaps exist in social services.
- Refers people to professionals—putting seekers of specific services together with the individual or organization most capable of meeting their needs.
- Monitors existing programs that affect the Latino community within state government and the private sector.
- Develops and monitors legislation that affects the Hispanic/Latino community in Oregon.
- Testifies before the Oregon Legislature on bills and measures deemed appropriate by the Commission and constituency.
- Encourages Oregon residents to resolve their own local issues in a positive, productive manner, with appropriate community stakeholders.
• Seeks and identifies emerging Hispanic leadership throughout the state.
• Promotes positive aspects of the Hispanic community.
• Works with its sister advocacy commissions, the Commissions on Women, Black, and Asian Pacific Islander Affairs to foster greater community as well as the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal and political equality for minorities in Oregon.

COMMISSION STRUCTURE

The Commission is comprised of eleven members, nine of whom are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate for three-year terms. The President of the Oregon Senate and the Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives each appoints one Legislative member for two-year terms. All Commission members abide by the Commission’s by-laws and the Oregon Code of Ethics set forth in ORS 244.050.

The Commission’s Standing Committees include an Education Committee, a Health Committee, and Social Justice Committee. Other committees are called by the Chair as needed.
Chair Alberto Moreno, Portland

Alberto Moreno is the Executive Director for the Oregon Latino Health Coalition, a statewide organization whose mission is to eliminate health disparities for Latinos in Oregon. As the Executive Director his focus is on addressing longstanding health inequities for Latinos in Oregon through policy and systems reform. Key policy priorities include ensuring that all pregnant women in Oregon have access to prenatal care services and that all children in Oregon truly have equal and unabridged access to timely medical care.

Vice Chair John Haroldson, Corvallis

The son of a Scandinavian father and a Mexican mother, John Haroldson was raised both in the Pacific Northwest and in Monterrey, Mexico, where he developed a rich bilingual and bicultural perspective. He holds the honor of serving as Oregon's first Mexican-American District Attorney in Benton County, Oregon. Mr. Haroldson has demonstrated a long-term commitment towards ensuring equal opportunity access for underrepresented individuals. He serves on the Advisory Board for the César Chávez Cultural Center at Oregon State University and as a Presenter for the Oregon State University CAMP and 4H Programs, where he works with monolingual Spanish speaking students and resides in Corvallis with his wife Maria. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy from Central Washington University and a Doctorate in Jurisprudence from the University of Oregon. He is a member of the Oregon and Washington State Bar Associations.

Andrea Cano, Portland

A social justice advocate and communications specialist, Andrea Cano is a Chicana who has served the people in this state as the director of the Oregon Farm Worker Ministry, administrator of a national media project to bring low power-FM radio stations to local communities, and as a consultant to multicultural, ecumenical, and interfaith organizations. Her international work has taken her to 30 countries including many in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Originally from California, she lived in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, and Quito, Ecuador, before settling in Oregon in 1999. She is a member of LACE (Latina Associates for Collaborative Endeavors), a new initiative of the Non-Profit Association of Oregon; the Metropolitan Youth Symphony's Board of Directors, and ENLACE International's CUP Directorate. With a Master in Divinity conferred by the Pacific School of Religion in 2011, she is a hospital chaplain at Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center. She led OCHA as vice chair from 2010-2011, and chair from 2011-2013.
Gilbert P. Carrasco, Portland
Gilbert Paul Carrasco is an expert in civil rights law, immigration law and constitutional law. He is the author of three national casebooks on these subjects and numerous law review articles. He has taught as a visiting professor at Lewis & Clark, Oregon, San Diego, Seton Hall and Willamette. He also studied for extended periods at Oxford, Stanford, Hastings and George Washington. Professor Carrasco teaches Civil Rights, Constitutional Law and Employment Discrimination. In 2008, he joined the board of directors of the Oregon chapter of the American Constitution Society. The following year, he was appointed to the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs by Gov. Ted Kulongoski.

Cynthia Carmina Gómez, Portland
Cynthia Carmina Gómez is a first generation Mexican-American raised in Yuma, Arizona. She moved to Oregon in 1993 and holds a Masters degree in Education, a Certificate in Chicano/Latino Studies and a Bachelors in Sociology. Today, Cynthia works at Portland State University as the Director of Cultural Centers in the Department of Diversity and Multicultural Student Services. In 1999, she became a faculty member in University Studies with a focus on teaching social justice and sustainability community-based learning courses. In 2003, Cynthia began working with the Portland non-profit Latino Network, first as a board member, where she co-founded Concilio Somos el Futuro; then as a direct service provider to adjudicated youth; and most recently, as the Director of Civic Engagement and Leadership Programs. She also worked as a Coordinator for the Oregon Leadership Institute, where she collaborated with college students and high school Latino students in partnership with Portland Public Schools and the Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement; held the title of Program Coordinator for Innovation Partnership; and operated her own consulting firm. She currently serves on the United Way Diversity Advisory Committee; is a parent representative on Bridger’s Portland Public School Site Council; and is a graduate of Leadership Portland, Class 2012.

Diego Hernandez, Portland
After attending seven elementary schools and three middle schools throughout the Portland Metro Area, Diego developed a passion for social justice, racial equity, and systemic change. The first in his family to attend college, Diego went on to earn a Master of Social Work from Portland State University and received the National Association of Social Workers Oregon Community Based Practice Award in 2012. Diego became the youngest person and first Latino elected to the Reynolds School Board in 2012. He is the Co-Executive Director of Momentum Alliance, where he first served as a founding board member, treasurer, and board chair. In addition to his work with Momentum Alliance, Diego brings broad experience working with middle school, high school, and college students and a deep passion for organizing. Diego is the board treasurer of the MRG Foundation.
Judith A. Parker, *Portland*

Judy Parker is the winemakers' lawyer. She is dedicated to helping Oregon's and Washington's winemakers navigate business formation, employment issues, regulatory compliance, and trademark registration so they can focus their time and energy on making premium northwest wines. In addition to wineries and winemakers, she also represents all manner of licensed professionals -- dentists, lawyers, architects -- anyone licensed before a state agency. Ms. Parker is very active in the legal community. She was the first Latina president of the Oregon Hispanic Bar Association and is currently the Secretary of the Oregon State Bar's Administrative Law Section. Ms. Parker said, “I'm committed to educating other Latino/a children around this state that they are able do whatever they dream, that they are equally worthy of their classmates to succeed. I pledge to be worthy of the Commission's goal: to work for the implementation of economic, social, legal, and political equity for Hispanics in Oregon.”

OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES

**Senator Chip Shields - D-Portland, District 22**

Chip has served in the Oregon House and Senate since 2005 where he focuses on living-wage jobs, health care, schools and equality. In the 2009 session, as Co-Chair of the Public Safety Subcommittee of Ways & Means, he protected services for domestic violence survivors, funding for drug and alcohol treatment, and negotiated and passed a bill that invests $1.5 million in pre-apprenticeship training for women and people of color.

**Representative Jessica Vega Pederson - D-Portland, District 47**

Jessica Vega Pederson is a first term State Representative for Oregon’s House District 47, which includes the Hazelwood neighborhood and most of Portland East of I205. Jessica serves on the House Committees of Revenue, Energy and Environment, and Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency and she co-chairs the Joint Committees on Tax Credits and Audits and Information Technology.
OCHA’s Statutory Accomplishments

2013

The Commission worked closely with the Governor’s Working Group on the Driver’s License bill to produce SB 833. Members of the Commission testified in favor of the bill and worked within the community spread the word of the new law’s application.3

In support of great opportunities for jobs and a strong economy, the Commission provided testimony in support of the passage of HB 2212, the small state procurement contracting bill. This bill passed and will raise the amount used to classify public procurement as small procurement. Equal access is a priority for the Commission, and, as then-Chair Cano wrote in her testimony, this bill will be (and has been) “a more substantial tool for state agencies incorporating intentional outreach to attract diverse contractors.”

The Commission joined its sister advocacy commissions4 to provide testimony in support of HB 3409A, the natural hair care special certificate bill; SB 739, the Oregon Department of Education consultation on Oregon history; SB 755, the Minority Teachers Act. All three of those bills passed and were signed into law.

The Commission greatly appreciated the opportunity to provide advice and wisdom to the legislature regarding significant health care bills. HB 2661 established the concept of culturally competent care. The Commission approached the other three advocacy commissions to obtain their support as well for this important concept and also provided live testimony to the same. This bill passed and enriches the healthcare experience for many. Second, the Commission worked hard to help the passage of HB 3407, to establish a commission on traditional health care workers.

In the arena of justice, safety, and policing, the four advocacy commissions supported passage of HB 2668, public accommodations on public property, and HB 2669, which provided interns protection while at work although not being paid, a small loophole in our employment laws.

On the topic of education, the Commission sent a letter to the legislature in support of HB 2787, tuition equity, which passed. The Commission also joined with its sister advocacy commissions to provide testimony before the Oregon Education Investment Board recommending the use of an equity lens when setting education policy.

In addition to these bills, the Commissioners supported HJR1, which would have amended the Oregon Constitution to end the death penalty5; SB 560, which would have ended racial

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3 Naturally, when Ballot Measure 88, through a citizen’s veto referendum, was accepted for the November 2014 general election, all Commission activity and endorsement ceased, in accordance with the state’s ethical rules.

4 Oregon has four advocacy commissions – the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs, the Oregon Commission for Women, and the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs. The four Advocacy Commissions work together through the umbrella meet regularly and work closely with the Oregon Advocacy Commission Office.

5 Vice Chair Haroldson is an elected district attorney – in fact, the first Hispanic elected district attorney in Oregon – and abstained from voting on whether the Commission should support HRJ 1.
profiling; and HB 2661A, for which all four advocacy commissions provided testimony, to advocate for a study on public safety disparities.

2014

The Commission focused its attention on two areas, education and healthcare. The Commission wrote testimony in support of the use of equity in the school funding formula and joined its sister advocacy commissions in preparing a letter to be sent to the School Funding Committee of the legislature.

In support of HB 4090A, the Commission advocated that the Joint Ways and Means Committee schedule a hearing for the bill. HB 4090A would have expanded school lunch programs.

The Commission provided testimony in support of HB 4116, which expanded grants to Oregon’s community colleges for tuition support of underserved students. This bill passed and was signed into law.

The Commission also provided testimony in support of SB 1569A, which would have mandated that the Oregon Health Authority establish a list of chemicals harmful to children.
OCHA’s Mission and Strategic Focus

In 2014, newly elected Chair Moreno conducted a wide-spread survey of Latinos in Oregon, to glean what primary concerns they face on a daily basis – that is, what areas are most important for them and how do these inform the work of the Commission. After reviewing the data, the Commission’s four goals are education, healthcare, social justice, and civic engagement. Under Chair Moreno’s leadership, the commissioners have worked within subcommittees for each area, reflecting the values that our community shares and what we can offer Oregonians in return.

Education

The education subcommittee worked closely with the Oregon Education Investment Board and the Oregon Department of Education to provide higher standards and quality of education to all our Oregonian children.

Among the goals of the education subcommittee are advocacy that community-based programs such as Juntos Aprendemos and the Latino Network be formally incorporated into the ODE’s outcome-based strategies.

Regional achievement collaborations and early learning hubs should incorporate people of diverse backgrounds. The education subcommittee advocates that in addition to this incorporation, the collaborations and hubs should include low-income people of color.

The education subcommittee is currently analyzing the troubling statistic that 50% of Oregon’s children are not reading at the third grade level.

On behalf of OCHA, Commissioner Cynthia Gómez worked on the Governor’s Environmental Justice Task Force. She worked with Julie Samples from the Oregon Law Center to develop guidelines for all agencies regarding limited English proficiency. She also mentors PSU student and intern Ankita Guritchait, who has attended meetings. Ms. Guritchait is working on archiving historical materials to make documents more accessible for members.

Health and Healthcare

As chair of the health subcommittee, Commissioner Gómez focused the subcommittee to develop three policy areas: health insurance, including ensuring access to all children in the state; statewide Limited English Proficiency guidelines; and providing health standards for unaccompanied minors.

Statewide health insurance is an important issue for OCHA and the subcommittee. Chair Moreno somberly notes that there are approximately 20,000 undocumented children in Oregon, each of whom is left out of the state’s health program with no access to Medicaid. The Oregon Latino Health Commission is launching its Health Care for All campaign for unaccompanied minors, categorically ineligible children, and/or all children in Oregon. The cost estimate for a Medicaid-like
program is about $60 million per biennium. The Coalition is looking at other, more incremental, options for providing a modest budget for coverage, setting aside state funding in the amount of $20 million. Counties providing the care would bill to this account. The Commission’s subcommittee works with the Oregon Latino Health Commission to ensure that the health of all of our children is protected.

As part of her work as an OCHA member representative on the Oregon Environmental Justice Task Force, Commissioner Gómez drafted a letter to encourage the state to develop Guidelines for all Agencies around Limited English Proficiency. See Attachments.

To be clear – unaccompanied minors have been arriving in our state for over a year and numbers are steadily increasing. Multnomah County works with the Morrison Child and Family Services to care for children in their school-based health centers to provide health checks within approximately 48 hours. Each intake meeting with an unaccompanied child includes an assessment of whether the child has relatives and whether family place or foster care is more appropriate. Those children considered to be at a high flight risk are provided more secure living arrangements through the Morrison Child and Family Services. Children under age five are seen at La Clinica. The Commission’s health subcommittee works with the Oregon congressional delegation to ask how the federal government can support this important issue within Oregon.

Social Justice

The social justice subcommittee focused its attention on three key areas: civil rights, the eradication of human trafficking, and to provide meaningful policy changes to remedy crime victims in Oregon. Commensurate with that, the three lawyers on the Commission, Vice Chair John Haroldson, Commissioner Judith Parker, and Commissioner Carrasco, himself a professor of law, worked closely with the Oregon State Bar and other stakeholder groups, as seen below.

Human trafficking – which includes labor and sex trafficking – is a pernicious and terrible condition. The violation and subjugation of one person to another is not welcome in Oregon. Members of the subcommittee attended multiple human trafficking conferences and worked with experts in the field to increase awareness of the issue. Commissioner Parker represented the subcommittee and the Commission itself in the 2014-2015 public policy research project, alongside the U.S. Attorney’s office, PSU, and other advocacy commissions. (For more on this internship, please see Public Policy Research.)

Through the social justice subcommittee, Vice Chair Haroldson and Commissioner Parker remained engaged in advocating for victims of crime whose vulnerability has been exploited by opportunists, including theft and fraud. The Oregon State Bar is working with Vice Chair Haroldson to raise awareness for the need to protect and bring justice to victims of notario fraud. In collaboration with the Oregon State Bar, Vice Chair Haroldson will be reaching out to Oregon district attorneys to join in Bar programs promoting public safety and justice in an area where offenders have historically operated with impunity. Commissioner Parker worked with a large stakeholder
group to amend Oregon’s state bar law to make violating ORS 9.280 obstruction of justice (bill pending).

Commissioner Cano promoted the Immigration Town Hall, sponsored by the Washington-Oregon Coalition for Immigration Reform. She helped plan the town hall with representatives of the Washington and Oregon Commissions on Hispanic Affairs to explore common issues of the states’ combined 1.6 million Hispanics.

Finally, Vice Chair Haroldson is a member of and attends the U.S. Attorney’s task force on Human Labor Trafficking.

Civic Engagement and Partnerships

As in years past, the Commission strives to work closely with Oregon’s agencies and Hispanic stakeholders. Staying abreast of the questions and concerns our communities are expressing allows Commissioners to offer input from an informed perspective. The following are but a few of the important connections and state-wide scope of partnerships and engagement of the commissioners.

Commissioners Cano and Parker, at the request of Governor Kitzhaber, represented the Commission and its constituents, at the Oregon Department of Transportation small business advisory council. This important issue goes to the heart of economic stability and prosperity throughout the state.

Commissioner Gómez also worked closely with the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division on communicating pesticide worker protection standards to the sister advocacy commissions.

Commission Vice Chair Haroldson engaged with Latinos from a broad range of our communities, with a strong focus on education and leadership development. In 2014, he engaged with Latino youth at the elementary, junior high, and high school level through the 4-H programs. He also engaged with incarcerated Latino youth through the Oregon Youth Authority. Finally, recognized on a nationwide level, he worked with the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute to organize leadership development opportunities for Latino students in Oregon.

Commissioner Parker represented the Commission at the ongoing disparity study conducted by the Oregon Department of Transportation. The Commission was influential in ensuring equal access to all participants.

Commissioner Cano served on the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles Latino Task Group. At the request of the DMV, she identified two Hispanics to join her – Ana Gomez, a design engineer originally from Colombia based in Central Oregon who directs community education projects and serves on the OEIB Quality Education Commission; and Octaviano Mercias, also a community educator for OSU originally from Oaxaca who is trilingual in Mixteco, Spanish and English. Commissioner Cano and the others on the task group reviewed and commented on the
Spanish language version of the web-based information and brochure regarding the then-new Driver’s Permit application process.

Continuing her work in years past, Commissioner Parker worked closely with the Secretary of State to register newly naturalized citizens to vote.

In 2014, Vice Chair Haroldson had the opportunity to travel to Mexico to work with Mexican prosecutors and investigators on reforms of the Mexican criminal justice system. This afforded him the opportunity to learn about perspectives on the interplay between each respective countries systems.

Commissioners Gómez and Cano attended the bi-annual Oregon Latino Agenda for Action Summit.

Both Vice Chair Haroldson and Commissioner Parker worked with the Oregon State Bar in advocating for greater diversity and inclusion among the bar.

Public Policy Research

For the past few years, the Commission has worked with doctoral students and law students providing externship and internships. The Commission proposes various policy issues that need creative solutions as well as a light shining on particular flaws to our stakeholders. Once a particular project is established, in partnership with other state agencies or experts in the field, as appropriate, the Commission submits applications throughout Oregon’s higher education schools. After a thorough application process, the Commission selects caliber interns and externs.

Once the team is established, the public policy interns work closely with the Commission and its partners while they intensely research various public policy issues. These areas of focused study can lead to more than just facts and figures – the interns glean together disparate facts and statistics to find something concrete that we as a state can rectify. All intern and extern public policy internship and externship reports are available to the public through the OCHA webpage.

2013: Education Disparities

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Past reports include Masters Candidate Rolando Cruz’s examination of migrant workers health status, in partnership with the Governor’s office (2011) and JD Candidate Wes Garcia’s white paper on Oregon’s hate crime protection laws in partnership with the Department of Justice and the Governor’s office (2012).
Doctoral candidate Johanna Blackford researched disparity issues on behalf of the Commission. She will ultimately produce seven issue briefs, each focusing on disparity throughout the state. The study had a particular emphasis on English Language Learners and on disproportionate discipline. This internship was in partnership with the Oregon Education Investment Board and the Governor’s office. She presented the issue briefs to the OEIB and the Commission at the end of the year. Commissioner Carlos Perez worked closely with Ms. Blackford. See Links.

2014: Human Trafficking

The Commission joined its sister advocacy commissions to work with the U.S. Attorney’s office and with the Governor’s office to produce an intensive research project on human trafficking in Multnomah County. This project’s goal is to analyze and synthesize convictions and arrests of perpetrators of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Multnomah County. (Multnomah County was chosen because of the proximity of records and statistically provides a glimpse into the statewide problem.) The goal of this project is to develop a new understanding of this insidious hidden netherworld in our state. Human trafficking affects all races and religions; it affects communities and it tears families apart. Sex trafficking and labor trafficking can only be fought and annihilated through a careful understanding of who we are and what we do; this project will do so. OCHA is proud to partner with U.S. Attorney Amanda Marshall and Portland State University Professor Christopher Carey, JD, PhD.

Links:
- Public Policy Briefs: Chronic Absenteeism in Oregon Schools
  Disproportionate Discipline in Oregon’s K-12 Schools
  English Language Learners in Oregon’s Education System
- Environmental Justice Task Force Limited English Proficiency letter
- Portland State University Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area Memorandum
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This report available online:

The Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
2013 - 2015 Biennial Report

Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
“Advocating Equality and Diversity”

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