

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Karin Brownlee at 9:00 a.m. on March 3, 2004 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Kathie Sparks, Legislative Research  
Susan Kannarr, Legislative Research  
Helen Pedigo, Revisor of Statutes  
Nikki Kraus, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Danielle Dempsey-Swopes, Executive Director for Kansas African-American Affairs Commission  
Elias Garcia, Executive Director, Kansas Advisory Committee on Hispanic Affairs

Others attending:

See Attached List.

Chairperson Brownlee opened the public hearing on:

**Sub HB 2435—An act concerning the governor's office; renaming the advisory committee on Hispanic affairs as the Hispanic and Latino American affairs commission and placing such commission within the governor's office; providing for the advisory commission on African-American affairs to be within the governor's office**

Ms. Dempsey-Swopes provided the committee with testimony in support of the bill. (Attachment 1) She stated that the commission is a comprised of seven members, all of which are in full support of bill. She stated that African-Americans in Kansas see her organization as a connection to the policymakers who are responsible for meeting the needs of their community. Through this, the commission seeks to understand the concerns of the people they serve and make these issues known to the governing bodies of the state. Ms. Dempsey-Swopes stated that some of the concerns of KAAAC include: education and education policy, corrections policies and the judicial system, health care, and employment opportunities.

She concluded that KAAAC and the Hispanic commissions' collaboration would be the most efficient way to work to serve the people of the state.

Chairperson Brownlee asked Ms. Dempsey-Swopes to explain the charge of the commission to the committee. Ms. Dempsey-Swopes stated that it was largely just to present useful information to the legislature and other governing bodies in order to help them make informed decisions, and to represent the concerns of the community to those bodies.

Chairperson Brownlee asked if the KAAAC had created a separate mission or vision statement aside from the recognition that it followed a statutory charge. Ms. Dempsey-Swopes stated that the foremost mission is what she had mentioned previously, especially focusing in the areas most concerning the Kansas African-American community.

Chairperson Brownlee stated that she appreciated Ms. Dempsey-Swopes mentioning ACT scores among educational concerns. Chairperson Brownlee noted that because those are measurable, they are easier statistics to track progress. The Chair then asked what the greatest accomplishment of the KAAAC was so far.

Ms. Dempsey-Swopes stated that the greatest accomplishment was probably increasingly widespread recognition of their existence by Kansans and the ability to get out there and be involved and helpful with their issues.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE at 8:30 a.m. on March 3, 2004 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Mr. Garcia presented testimony in favor of the bill. (Attachment 2)

He explained to the committee that the reason for the bill requesting a name change is that "Hispanic" is a census term, while "Latino" is a more natural term that is inclusive of the 28 cultures found under that umbrella. He stated that 35% of Latinos in the US are from non-Mexican cultures, so this change would play an important inclusive role. Mr. Garcia explained that changing from a committee to a commission would make his group more consistent with other, similar organizations, and that he feels that the move under the Governor's office is a positive and productive one. He thanked the committee and offered to answer any questions, as well as announcing that Friday, March 5, would be Hispanic Day on the Hill, and all legislators were invited to come celebrate.

Chairperson Brownlee asked Mr. Garcia for more detail concerning the increase she had been reading about in the number of Kansas Hispanic children.

Mr. Garcia stated that of 40 million Latinos in the United States, fifty percent are under the age of twenty-five.

The Chair and Mr. Garcia discussed a particular area in Olathe as that which ranks highest in the Hispanic population burst in the last five years.

Chairperson Brownlee thanked the speakers and suggested the committee work the bill on Friday morning at the 8:00 a.m. meeting to mark Hispanic Day on the Hill.

Chairperson Brownlee asked if anyone else would like to speak to **HB 2435**, and there were no responses. Chairperson Brownlee closed the hearing on **HB 2435**.

Chairperson Brownlee adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m. The next meeting will be at 8:30 a.m. on March 3, 2004 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.