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BUDGET TESTIMONY OF MAY 4, 2011

Finance Committee
The Honorable Chris Widener, Chairman

Chair Widener, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Skindell, my home district Senator Bacon, and other Honorable members of the Finance Committee, my name is Lilly Cavanaugh and I am honored to serve you as Executive Director of the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony on behalf of our 10 distinguished commissioners, all appointed by the Governor and confirmed by you and your colleagues in the Ohio Senate.

Governor Rhodes created our commission 34 years ago to advise our legislature and executive branch on issues impacting Hispanic Ohioans; to connect our diverse communities; and to build the capacity of our institutions so we may better serve Ohio's most rapidly growing population. In addition to dedicated service to our state, we are a member of the National Council of Latino Affairs supported by the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute led by Dr. Juan Andrade, founding director of our commission.

For over 3 decades, you have wisely encouraged our mission and funded our important mandate. Today, we respectfully ask for your approval of Governor Kasich's proposed biennial budget appropriation for our agency.

Please know your support is deeply appreciated, and greatly needed. At a time when Ohio disappointingly experienced a net decrease in residents resulting in a loss to our representation in Washington and negatively affecting our federal appropriations, as part of Ohio's Complete Count Committee, we are pleased to report the 2010 Census shows our population increased 63.4% to a total of 354,000. Our expanding demographic is comprised of more than 11,000 Latino Veterans and active duty military personnel. Ohio has 9,725 Hispanic-owned businesses that create an estimated \$1.9 billion in receipts. Total annual earnings of Hispanic Ohioans amount to approximately \$5.2 billion.

Thus, for a relatively modest appropriation of \$346,952 in FY 2012 and \$347,189 in FY 2013, we can continue to harness the economic power of our growing population. Put simply, your strategic investment of less than one dollar per person helps to return millions in needed revenue and billions in economic activity for our state.

Our agency enthusiastically supports your current emphasis on creating jobs and more opportunity for all Ohioans. In fact, studies clearly confirm the positive contributions of our community. According to U.S. Census expert John Logan: "The futures of most metropolitan areas in the country are contingent on how attractive they are to Hispanic and Asian populations." To reach this goal, our commission in cooperation with the Ohio Asian and Pacific Is-



landers Advisory Council is committed to helping you build a better, more multi-cultural, and global ready Ohio. Why is this important? Because we must leverage Ohio's international relationships. For example, next time your family buys bananas, take a look at the label. There is a good chance they were imported from my native Costa Rica by Chiquita Brands headquartered in Cincinnati which has operations on 6 continents and 21,000 employees - most based in Central America. On the export side of the equation, lining the shelves of stores in cities across Latin America, you will find Similac. This baby formula is made by Abbott Laboratories which has offices and operations right down the street and 90,000 employees worldwide. To quote the growth strategy of Proctor & Gamble, yet another global enterprise based right here in Ohio: "We will grow by touching more consumers' lives in more parts of the world."

Our agency helps Ohio fuel this dynamic growth energy by encouraging our vibrant community's new venture capitalists. In 2007, we created Project OPEN - an economic capacity building initiative in partnership with the Ohio Department of Development. This innovative project helps Latino entrepreneurs navigate the waters of Ohio's complex regulatory environment, prepare business plans, and create more employment opportunities open to all Ohioans.

Our successful pilot here in Central Ohio inspired the Department of Development to invite Cleveland's Hispanic Chamber to establish their own center. In just 2 years, the Cuyahoga County Latino SBDC facilitated \$15 million in contracts; prevented 16 layoffs; and created 125 new jobs. Working with our Ohio Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, we hosted 50 Latino small business owners here at our Capitol for a day of discussion on Ohio's regulatory environment. Our corporate leaders used this special opportunity to help shape your recently passed Common Sense Initiative.

Likewise, invaluable input from our agency provided the key to Ohio's winning the U.S. Department of Education's "Race to the Top" grant which awarded our state \$400 million in additional funds to improve our schools. We are currently members of the State Reform Steering Team, a high level public/private leadership group tasked with oversight to ensure that Ohio meets its federal commitments.

Our small, but dedicated professional staff is adept at delivering constituent services and disseminating public notices to hard-to-reach constituencies. As you know, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act established rules for all government services. The law requires all federally funded agencies to provide meaningful access for residents of different national origin. Thus, as documented in our 2010 annual report, by means of our inter-agency council statute, we help Hispanic Ohioans access mandated services from a wide range of state agencies.

For example, via "OLAnet" our automated community data management system, we provide government agencies and the private sector the ability to reach Latinos across Ohio's 88 counties at a moment's notice. Successes include special e-campaigns on health crises such as the H1N1 flu pandemic and the whooping cough epidemic; as well as severe weather alerts such as tornadoes and the ongoing flooding disasters, just to name a few.

Over the next biennium, our agency pledges our best practices in order to strengthen Ohio's progress in Workforce Development, Education Reform, and Global Competitiveness. As our state emerges from this painful period of economic recovery, we will strive for continuous improvement so that we can achieve even further cost savings for our state.

Mr. Chairman and Honorable members of the committee, we sincerely look forward to delivering even more impressive economic, social, and cultural impact for our state in the upcoming 2020 Census. I am grateful for your attention and graciously stand ready for your questions.

Respectfully submitted,



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