

1 AN ACT concerning Latino families.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Illinois Latino Family Commission Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative Findings. It is the policy of this  
7 State to promote family preservation and to strengthen  
8 families.

9 Latinos are well represented among the families of  
10 Illinois. The Illinois Latino population is the fifth largest  
11 in the nation. Over 14% of the estimated 12,000,000 people that  
12 live in Illinois are Latinos. According to the 2000 Census  
13 figures, more than 1,750,000 Latinos make Illinois their home.  
14 This figure represents a 69.2% increase from the 1990 Census  
15 figures compared to about 3.5% for non-Latinos. The Latino  
16 population explosion accounted for two-thirds of the total  
17 population change in Illinois and it is visible throughout the  
18 State.

19 In Cook County alone, the Latino population has increased  
20 to about 1,071,740. In the 6 county region including Cook  
21 County, nearly 69% of new residents were Hispanic. Roughly  
22 23.7% of Kane County residents are Latino. In Lake County,  
23 Latinos make up 14.4% of the total county population.

1           Latinos are not only the fastest growing ethnic group in  
2 the State, they are also the youngest. The median age for  
3 Latinos in Illinois is 25, compared to 36 for non-Latinos.  
4 Despite unprecedented population growth, Latinos lag behind in  
5 major indicators of well-being relative to education, health,  
6 employment, and child welfare, as well as representation  
7 throughout the State. Moreover, Latino children and families  
8 present unique linguistic, cultural, and immigration issues  
9 for the State.

10           Latinos have a well-established presence in the child  
11 welfare system. Of the total 86,973 children that were reported  
12 abused or neglected in Fiscal Year 2001, about 8,442 or 9.7%  
13 were Hispanic children. About 25% of these hotline reports were  
14 indicated, for a total of 2,155 Latino children in Fiscal Year  
15 2001. As of August 2003, there were about 1,367 open Latino  
16 child abuse cases in Illinois. This figure is only slightly  
17 lower than the 1,491 open Latino child cases reported for the  
18 previous fiscal year. Hispanic cases make up about 6% of all  
19 open child cases (excluding adoption assistance and home of  
20 parent living arrangement). Latino families receiving services  
21 make up about 16% of all intact family cases. It is estimated  
22 that between 60% and 80% of all Latino families involved with  
23 the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS)  
24 will need bilingual services at some point during the time  
25 their case is open. However, IDCFS struggles to meet the demand  
26 for bilingual services. There are similar examples throughout

1 the State demonstrating that Illinois lacks a unified and  
2 comprehensive strategy for addressing the unique needs of  
3 Latino families.

4 Latino families remain outside of the margins of  
5 opportunities in the State. There are tremendous challenges  
6 faced by Latino families and children in the State. Clearly,  
7 the growing Latino presence demands that government, child and  
8 family advocates, and other key stakeholders come together to  
9 identify and implement policy strategies that can create an  
10 infrastructure of support for Latino families in the State.  
11 Building this needed infrastructure of policies must involve  
12 multiple State agencies. The Illinois Latino Family Commission  
13 shall lead the effort, advising the Governor and assisting  
14 State agencies with this task.

15 Section 10. Established. The Illinois Latino Family  
16 Commission is established.

17 Section 15. Purpose and objectives.

18 (a) The purpose of the Illinois Latino Family Commission is  
19 to advise the Governor and General Assembly, as well as work  
20 directly with State agencies to improve and expand existing  
21 policies, services, programs, and opportunities for Latino  
22 families. Subject to appropriation, the Illinois Latino Family  
23 Commission shall guide the efforts of and collaborate with  
24 State agencies, including: the Department on Aging, the

1 Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of  
2 Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Department of  
3 Corrections, the Department of Human Services, the Department  
4 of Public Aid, the Department of Public Health, the Department  
5 of Transportation, and others. This shall be achieved primarily  
6 by:

7 (1) monitoring and commenting on existing and proposed  
8 legislation and programs designed to address the needs of  
9 Latinos in Illinois;

10 (2) assisting State agencies in developing programs,  
11 services, public policies, and research strategies that  
12 will expand and enhance the social and economic well-being  
13 of Latino children and families;

14 (3) facilitating the participation and representation  
15 of Latinos in the development, implementation, and  
16 planning of policies, programs, and services; and

17 (4) promoting research efforts to document the impact  
18 of policies and programs on Latino families.

19 The work of the Illinois Latino Family Commission shall  
20 include the use of existing reports, research, and planning  
21 efforts, procedures, and programs.

22 Section 20. Appointment; terms. The Illinois Latino Family  
23 Commission shall be comprised of 15 members. Members shall be  
24 appointed by the Governor. Each member shall have working  
25 knowledge of human services, community development, and

1 economic public policies in Illinois. The Governor shall  
2 appoint the chairperson or chairpersons.

3 The members shall reflect regional representation to  
4 ensure that the needs of Latino families and children  
5 throughout the State are met. The members shall be selected  
6 from a variety of disciplines. They shall represent a  
7 partnership and collaborative effort between public and  
8 private agencies, the business sector, and community-based  
9 human services organizations.

10 Members shall serve 3-year terms, except in the case of  
11 initial appointments. Five members, as determined by lot, shall  
12 be appointed to one-year terms; 5 members shall be appointed to  
13 2-year terms; and 5 members shall be appointed to 3-year terms,  
14 so that the terms are staggered. Members shall serve without  
15 compensation, but shall be reimbursed for Commission-related  
16 expenses.

17 The Department on Aging, the Department of Children and  
18 Family Services, the Department of Commerce and Economic  
19 Opportunity, the Department of Corrections, the Department of  
20 Human Services, the Department of Public Aid, the Department of  
21 Public Health, and the Department of Transportation shall each  
22 appoint a liaison to serve ex-officio on the Commission.

23 Section 25. Funding. The Illinois Latino Family Commission  
24 may receive funding through specific appropriations available  
25 for its purposes made to the Department on Aging, the

1 Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of  
2 Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Department of  
3 Corrections, the Department of Human Services, the Department  
4 of Public Aid, the Department of Public Health, and the  
5 Department of Transportation. The funding allocation for the  
6 Commission shall be no less than \$500,000.

7 Section 30. Reporting. The Illinois Latino Family  
8 Commission shall annually report to the Governor and the  
9 General Assembly on the Commission's progress towards its goals  
10 and objectives.

11 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
12 becoming law.