

LATINO AMERICAN COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED IN 1972 | SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER | WWW.LATINOAC.NEBRASKA.GOV



Mission Statement: The mission of the Latino - American Commission is to serve as a voice in the Nebraska State Government for Latino Americans/ Latinos.

Vision Statement: The vision of the Latino - American Commission is to empower the Latino Community through a pro-active approach to issues that affect their access to educational, political, economical and social opportunities in Nebraska.

First Latina Appointed to Judgeship in State History

Nebraska Governor Heineman appointed Stefanie A. Martinez of Papillion to the County Court, 2nd Judicial District, making her the first Hispanic in state history to be appointed to judgeship.

Since 2008, Martinez, 43, has served in several positions at the Sarpy County Attorney's Office including the Drug Court Team, the Senior Deputy County Attorney and as a Domestic Violence Coordinator.

She earned her Juris Doctorate from New York Law School and received a Bachelors of Arts in Sociology and Spanish from Boston College. Martinez is fluent in Spanish.

She has also had a solo practice, and has served as an Administrative Hearing Officer for the State of Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles and as an Assistant Public Defender in the Douglas County Public Defender's Office.

Lexington Student Named Coca-Cola Semifinalist

Elizabeth Moro, a Lexington High School senior, was recently named a Coca-Cola Scholar Semifinalist by the Coca-Cola Scholarship Foundation.

Moro is one of 22 students in Nebraska to be named a Semifinalist for the Coca-Cola Scholars Scholarship. The prestigious achievement-based scholarship focuses on student grades and accomplishments, but not on their financial need or background.

To qualify, high school seniors need to have a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale and list their school, community and leadership activities.

"When I found out that I was a semifinalist for the Coca Cola Scholarship, I was very excited and surprised. I never expected to get that far. It was a great feeling seeing my name as a Semifinalist from Nebraska," said Moro, who will graduate with a 3.74 GPA and has a long list of activities and accomplishments on her resume.

The Coca-Cola Scholar Scholarship awards a minimum of \$20,000 per student to be used for tuition, lodging, and textbooks for up to a six-year period.



Elizabeth Moro

"I've been getting really good grades my senior year since I've been trying extra hard. The activities I've done during high school are Miss Voz Latina, which I was chosen as Miss Voz Latina 2013," said Moro, who also participates on the schools' soccer and softball teams.

Outside of school, she volunteers for the Keep Lexington Beautiful recycling program and other volunteer programs. "If I could go back, I would've done more activities. Being active in high school is a great experience and it benefits you a lot."

Unfortunately, none of the Nebraska Semifinalists advanced to Finalist, but it is still an impressive accomplishment for Moro considering that only 2,000 students nationwide are named Semifinalists, and of those students only 250 advance to Finalist before being narrowed down to the 150 Coca-Cola Scholars Scholarship recipients.

The 17-year-old Lexington native is proud of being a Semifinalist, but she recognizes that she will have to find another way to pay for her college education. She does have big dreams for college and beyond.

"My goals after high school are to go on to a four-year university. My

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Lazaro Arturo Spindola
NLAC Executive Director

Latino American Commission Commissioners

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Chandra Diaz-DeBose (Vice-Chair)

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Jasel Cantu
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www.latinoac.nebraska.gov

A Message from the Executive Director

The 2014 legislative session was quite dynamic. Several filibusters, heated debates, and even some hard words were all present. On the other hand, several resolutions important to the Latino community were passed including LR417 making September 15 to October 15 Hispanic Heritage Month in Nebraska, and during the last day of the session, LR399 recommending that the House of Representatives should pass H.R. 15, the “Border Security, Economic, Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” was approved after a lengthy debate and attempt to filibuster.

Immigration Reform is an ongoing issue in Washington. Some constituents have faced challenges while trying to adjust their immigration status. For your information, notarizing a document is free in the State Capitol, and an apostille costs only \$10. Some free legal immigration aid is being offered by Emiliano Lerda at Justice for Our Neighbors (855.964.2542) or Yolanda Nuncio with Saint Mary’s Immigration Program (308.381.2855 ext. 303). If you are aware of similar services, please contact us so we can provide the information.

Workers Rights are still a contentious subject. Nebraska Appleseed has put together a video that explains certain procedures taken in case someone feels that they are being abused or cheated on their paychecks. If you feel that you are being abused, contact the U.S. Dept. of Labor, (1-866-487-9243) the Assistant District Director is Richard Tesarek. You will need the following information: Your name, address, and phone number; the name, location, and phone number of the company where you work(ed), manager or owners name, type of work you did, when you were paid and how.

As the summer continues we recommend for students and parents to look into signing up for Advanced Placement (AP) classes. These classes will help students prepare for college and make them more eligible for scholarships. Ask your counselor for a list of AP classes offered at your school. At our Latino Summit, Luis Sotelo gave a session explaining aspects taken into account by College Admission Offices. Grades are a factor, but not the only one. If you wish, contact Luis at 308.234.2113 in Lexington for guidance, or Romulo Vega (402.479.6658) in Lincoln, or Victor Garcia (402.391.7376) in Omaha. They work for EducationQuest.

Have a Wonderful Summer,

Dr. Lazaro Arturo Spindola, Executive Director - Latino American Commission

Farewell, Commissioner Chandra Diaz-DeBose

Chandra Diaz-DeBose was born and raised in Ogallala, Neb. and moved to Lincoln in 1992 to attend the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL).

As a college student, she was active with many student organizations. She joined the Mexican American Student Association (MASA), the UNL Chancellor’s Commission on the Status of People of Color, the UNL Chapter of the Future Educator’s Association and the Newman Center Catholic Church, now known as the St. Thomas Aquinas Church-Newman Center.

Diaz-DeBose graduated from UNL in 1997 with a Bachelor’s of Science in Middle Level Education. She began her career in education as an 8th grade math teacher at Scott Middle School before eventually making her way to Park Middle School where she would teach math for the next eight years. She observes that it was during this time that she began to work closely with Latino students.

“I was a sponsor for Park’s Latino Club for eight years and made a long-lasting connection to families who live near the school,” said Diaz-DeBose. “I was fortunate to move into administration, into a building where many of my middle school students attended.”

After working with middle school students for a combined 10 years at both Scott and Park Middle School, she became a member of Lincoln High School’s administrative team as an



Chandra Diaz-DeBose

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Cesar Chavez Day Proclamation



On March 13, 2014, Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman signed a Proclamation observing March 31st as Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning.

The day March 31st is the birth date of civil rights activist Cesar Chavez, and is observed nationwide although it is not a federal holiday. The Latino American Commission organized the Proclamation signing, and will do so again in 2015.

The Proclamation signing took place at the Warner Chamber on the second floor of the Capitol Building in Lincoln. NLAC Director Spindola said a few words about Cesar Chavez and his work after the Proclamation was read by Governor Heineman.

Director Spindola encouraged the audience to consider the workers who pick and process the food they eat the next time they sit down for a meal.

The Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning Proclamation is currently displayed in the Latino American Commission office.

The Proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS, On March 31, 1927, Cesar Chavez was born on a small ranch near Yuma, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, When severe drought forced the Chavez family to give up their ranch in Yuma, they began picking crops on California farms; and

WHEREAS, After serving our nation in WWII, Cesar Chavez returned to farm labor in California and began advocating for worker's rights; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Cesar Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America (UFW), AFL-CIO, the first successful farm workers' union in the United States history; and

WHEREAS, Under Cesar Chavez's tireless leadership, the UFW was the first to win collective bargaining for farm workers; and

WHEREAS, At its peak in the 1980's, the UFW's collective bargaining agreements covered approximately 80,000 workers across the nation; and

(Above) The Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning Proclamation Signing took place in the Capitol Building Warner Chamber on March 13, 2014. Those in attendance were: (from left to right) Dr. Sergio Wals, Political Science Professor at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Jose Santos, NLAC Commissioner with the Dept. of Labor, Chandra Diaz-DeBose, NLAC Commissioner with Lincoln Public Schools, Loren Mestre-Roberts with the City of Lincoln, Jasel Cantu, NLAC Public Information Officer, Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman, and NLAC Director Dr. Arturo Spindola.

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez led a successful five year grape-pickers' strike that rallied millions of supporters to the UFW and forged a national coalition of unions, church groups, students, minorities and consumers; and

WHEREAS, On April 23, 1993, Cesar Chavez passed away, leaving behind an enduring legacy of service and leadership; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez's influence has made a lasting impact on farm labor issues and inspired millions of Latinos to achieve educational and political success; and

WHEREAS, On March 31, 2014, individuals and organizations throughout Nebraska are encouraged to celebrate Cesar Chavez's life and work by participating in community service projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dave Heineman, Governor of the State of Nebraska, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM the 31st day of March, 2014 as

CESAR CHAVEZ DAY OF SERVICE AND LEARNING

in Nebraska, and I do hereby urge all citizens to take due note of the observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand, and cause the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska to be affixed this Thirteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Fourteen.

The next Proclamation the Latino American Commission is organizing will be for Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day occurring in July 2014. A date and time is yet to be announced.

U.S. Military Academy Applications Open

High school students are encouraged to apply to a U.S. Military Academy if they are interested in attending college and joining the military. The service academies provide a first-rate college education in conjunction with military training in preparation to be a commissioned officer in the U.S. military.

What are the five service academies?

- U.S. Military Academy (Army) - West Point, New York
<http://www.usma.edu/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- Naval Academy - Annapolis, Maryland
<http://www.usna.edu/homepage.php>
- Coast Guard Academy - London, Connecticut
<http://www.cga.edu/>
- Merchant Marine Academy - Kings Point, New York
<http://www.usmma.edu/>
- Air Force Academy - Colorado Springs, Colorado
<http://www.usafa.af.mil/>

Educational Value

The full four year college scholarship is estimated to be worth over \$350,000 including tuition, room and board, medical and dental care and a monthly salary. Students can expect to be educated in discipline, morals, ethics and military science in an environment that fosters development of teamwork, leadership and character.

Military Benefits

Upon graduation from the service academy, you will then have a service contract with the government or military. After completion of your service requirement, you will most likely have earned veteran status, which then entitles you to a full range of state and federal benefits which may include the VA home loan, VA compensation and pension, VA healthcare and VA education benefits.

How do I apply?

You should apply directly to the service academies through their websites AND seek a "nomination" from your U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator. You may choose to seek more than one nomination, and you can also be nominated to more than one academy.

Nominations for the service academies are required for all but the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA). Applications to the USCGA are made directly to the academy.

What is the basic eligibility?

Basic eligibility include:

- Age: Must be at least 17 years old, but not yet 23 years old, on July 1 of the year you will enter the academy (25th birthday for the Merchant Marine Academy).
- Citizenship: Must be a U.S. citizen.
- Marital Status: Must be unmarried, not pregnant, and have no legal obligation to support children or other dependents.

When should I apply?

Application deadlines at each academy vary so it is important to research the timeline prior to applying. You may apply for a nomination as soon as January of your Junior year or as late as after your high

school graduation provided you meet eligibility criteria. You should complete and submit your application packet for nomination by the set deadline of each U.S. Representative or Congressman.

Who are my Congressional & U.S. Senate Representatives?

Each U.S. Senate and Congressional Representative has information regarding the service academies on their websites. Remember, you can apply to more than one Representative.

All Representatives are currently accepting calls and inquiries about Academy nominations. If you contact their office they will mail you an application packet:

- **Jeff Fortenberry** - Congressman, Nebraska's 1st Congressional District. Nominations are now open, students or parents can request application packets anytime between now and September. The deadline for the completed application packet is October 15, 2014. Congressman Fortenberry's district includes most of the Eastern quarter of the state including Lincoln, Norfolk and Fremont, but does not include Omaha nor any part of Douglas County. Application packets can be requested by calling Jeannie Walker at 402-438-1598 or by email at: Jeannie.Walker@mail.house.gov. For more information visit: <http://fortenberry.house.gov/academy-nominations/>
- **Lee Terry** - Congressman, Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District includes the city of Omaha, all of Douglas County and portions of Sarpy County. His office is currently accepting requests for Academy nomination applications, students or parents can contact his Omaha office and request to speak with Dean at 402-397-9944 or request the application online at: <http://leeterry.house.gov/constituent-services/service-academy-nominations.htm>
- **Adrian Smith** - Congressman, representing Nebraska's 3rd Congressional District, includes 68.5 counties including the cities of Grand Island, Kearney, Hastings, North Platte and Scottsbluff. Application packets can be requested by calling 308-384-3900 and speaking with any staff member. Requests for application packets are being accepted between now and Sept. 30, 2014. For more information visit: <https://adriansmith.house.gov/serving-you/military-academy-nominations>
- **Deb Fisher** - U.S. Senator, her district includes 12 counties and a portion of a 13th county. Her office is currently accepting application packet requests. Completed application packets are due in August. You can call her Omaha office at 402-441-4600 to request a packet or fill out an application request form online at: <http://www.fischer.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/academy-nominations>
- **Mike Johanns** - U.S. Senator, is the second U.S. Senator in the state opposite of Senator Fischer. Completed application packets are due at the Senator's office by September 26, 2014. Application packets can currently be requested by contacting Alan Wang at 402-758-1817 or: alan_wang@johanns.senate.gov. Application packets can also be requested online by filling out a request form at: <http://www.johanns.senate.gov/public/?p=AcademyNominations>

State Boards & Commissions Accepting Applications

A way to represent and help the community is to be a member of a state government Board or Commission Board of Directors.

By becoming a Board/Commission member you are providing a voice to your community, finding solutions to help solve problems, and keeping state agencies informed on local issues.

The Latino American Commission is one such state agency currently accepting applications for Commissioner positions. Below are the upcoming deadlines for Commissions and Boards, please submit member applications before the deadline month is over:

May:

- Dry Bean Commission
- Governor's Residence Advisory Commission
- Commission on Latino-Americans
- Board of Trustees – State College System

June:

- Accountability and Disclosure Commission
- Children's Commission
- Corn Development, Utilization & Marketing Board
- Commission on Housing and Homelessness
- Center for Nursing Board
- Wheat Development, Utilization & Marketing
- Women's Health Initiative Advisory Council

July:

- Aquaculture Board
- Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board
- County Attorney Standards Advisory Council
- Crime Victim's Reparation Committee
- Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee
- Grain Sorghum Development, Utilization & Marketing Board
- Jail Standards Board
- State Advisory Commission on Mental Health Services
- Advisory Committee on Public Water Supply
- Real Estate Commission
- State Records Board
- Technical Advisory Committee on Statewide Assessment
- State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse Services
- Wyuka Cemetery Board of Trustees

August:

- Brand Committee
- Commission for the Protection of Children
- Board of Health
- Personnel Board
- Potato Development Committee

September:

- Nebraska Arts Council
- Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council
- Economic Forecasting Advisory Board
- Electrical Board
- Equal Opportunity Commission
- GIS Geographic Information System Council

- Commission on Indian Affairs
- Board of Landscape Architects
- Natural Gas Fuel Board
- State Board of Public Accountancy
- SERC - State Emergency Response Commission
- Suggestion Award Board

October:

- Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
- Board of Educational Lands and Funds
- Propane Education & Research Council

November:

- Abstractors Board of Examiners
- Board of Barber Examiners
- Dairy Industry Development Board
- EPSCOR/IDEA Committee

December:

- Crime Commission
- Early Childhood Education Endowment
- Educational, Health and Social Services Finance Authority
- Elementary & Secondary School Finance Authority
- Enhanced Wireless 911 Advisory Board
- State Fair Board
- State Historical Society Board
- Investment Council
- Governor's Council to Keep Nebraska Beautiful
- United Nations Day Chair
- Workforce Investment Board

Below is a list of unfilled positions that may be applied to at any time:

- Board County Highway and City Street Supts
- Children's Commission
- Coordinating Commission on Postsecondary Education
- Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Education, Health and Social Services Finance Authority
- Elementary & Secondary School Finance Authority
- Board of Emergency Medical Services
- Commission on Housing and Homelessness
- Judicial Nom Commission
- Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission
- Coalition for Juvenile Justice
- Natural Gas Fuel Board
- Center for Nursing Board
- Personnel Board
- ServeNebraska
- Advisory Council on Public Water Supply
- Women's Health Initiative Advisory Council
- Workforce Investment Board

Applicants who have questions about qualifications may call Kathleen Dolezal at (402) 471-1971 or email: Kathleen.Dolezal@Nebraska.gov

To apply online, the application can be found, completed and submitted at: http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/bc/board_comm.html

Pieces of Nebraskan Hispanic History



The American GI Forum was founded in 1948 by Dr. Hector P. Garcia in Texas. In 1962, the American GI Forum was incorporated in Nebraska with chapters established in North Platte, Omaha, Scottsbluff and Lincoln being known statewide as the American GI Forum of Nebraska. The GI Forum motivated and developed leaders that represented the interests of Spanish surnamed people in Nebraska.

The Omaha chapter members banded together to purchase a building on 20th and N Street in Omaha in 1962. Among those first members were brothers Paul and Pascual Marquez who are lifetime members of the Forum chapter. The brothers were early activists in the fight for equality for Mexican Americans in Nebraska. Paul Marquez believed in the Forum so much that he put up his house to help purchase the property that still stands on 20th and N Street.

Among the work the American GI Forum of Nebraska did was report discrimination in 1973 against the State Highway Patrol, advocate for the establishment of both English and Spanish courses in elementary schools in 1975, and run a statewide outreach program for migrant workers in 1977. Jesse Cervantes, Nebraska GI Forum spokesman, would testify against a proposed law in the Unicameral that would have harmed Latinos in 1977.

The work the Nebraska GI Forum did would bring Dr. Hector P. Garcia to Omaha in the 1970's. In a speech, Dr. Garcia said he would ask the U.S. Department of Agriculture to investigate reports of abuse against Latino workers.

The American GI Forum of Nebraska would later be joined by the newly established Chicano Awareness Center, now Latino Center of the Midlands, of Omaha in 1971, the Mexican American Commission, now Latino American Commission, in 1972, and later the Indian Chicano Health Clinic now known as the OneWorld Community Health Center of Omaha, in advocating for Latino rights and equality.

Joseph Juarez began serving as the state's first Chairman in 1971. He would go on to become the National Chairman of the American GI Forum in 1972. Both he and Paul Marquez continue to serve the American GI Forum and fight for equal rights to this day.

Information and photos provided by Jose F. Garcia, National Historian of the American GI Forum.



(Above Center) A 1960's photo of the American GI Forum of Nebraska Ladies Auxillary Chapter in Omaha. The Women's Chapter still exists and holds meetings to this day.

(Above) Paul Marquez just celebrated his 90th birthday in April at a celebration held at the American GI Forum Omaha Chapter. He is still very active within the community.

Upcoming Events

- **Holiday: May 26**
Memorial Day
- **Meeting: June 14**
NLAC Quarterly Meeting - Peru
- **Event: June 22-27**
Latina Summer Academy - Omaha
- **Event: July 23**
Binational Teacher Ceremony - Lincoln
- **Holiday: July 4**
Independence Day
- **Event: July 9**
Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day Proclamation
- **Conference: July 19-22**
NCLR National Conference - Los Angeles
- **Holiday: September 1**
Labor Day

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Elizabeth Moro Continued

primary goal after college is to have a career that I enjoy, since I will be doing it for the rest of my life. I want it to be a good-paying career in order to have a home, car, and be able to live a comfortable life. I'm a very family-oriented person, so I wish to have one of my own. I also want to create a change in my community, and I'm hoping one day I will."

Moro's parents immigrated to Nebraska from Mexico. She said Mexican traditions are observed at home and Spanish is the dominant language; a detail that she is happy to share.

"We know where we came from, and we are very proud of that," she said.

When she reflects on how she could have advanced to a Coca-Cola Scholar, a few pieces of advice come to mind.

"I wish I would have asked for help and maybe I would've been Finalist," said Moro. "My advice for underclassmen would be to try hard since your freshman year. Everything you do counts and matters since then. Be active in school, participate in activities, and do as many things in high school as you can manage. Grades are important. They are not just a letter or a number; they will determine whether or not you earn a scholarship. Grades matter and students need to realize that we are lucky to have the education we have."

However, the soon-to-be-graduate's Coca-Cola scholarship experience is just another part of Moro's overall high school career, which leaves her with words of wisdom for entering freshman.

"High school has been a wonderful experience. I still remember coming as a freshman and thinking, 'Oh, my Lord'. I didn't know what to expect. Time flies and before you know it you will be walking out of the school with a diploma. I can't believe I'm a senior with only a few weeks left before graduation," said Moro, adding an acknowledgement to her success. "I thank my parents for being there for me, they have been my greatest supporters, and they have taught me to value my education. Lexington is full of amazing faculty. My teachers have been very supportive."

Moro plans to attend the University of Kearney at Nebraska where she will major in either a business field or education field. The Coca-Cola Scholarship will open 2014-15 applications in August with an October 31 deadline. Visit www.coca-colascholarsfoundation.org for more information.

Chandra Diaz-DeBose Continued

Instructional Coordinator in 2008. She earned a Master's of Science in Urban Education from UNL in 2002. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Philosophy in Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education from UNL.

"Over the past six years in administration, I have learned how important it is for schools to connect to families and community," she said.

College graduation has not stopped Diaz-DeBose from volunteering in the community and serving as a member of local organizations. She has served on the Board of Directors for Friendship Home in Lincoln, the Hispanic Center now known as El Centro de las Americas, and most recently as a Commissioner on the Nebraska Latino-American Commission (NLAC).

She served two terms as a Commissioner with NLAC in July 2008 and was reappointed in 2011, representing the city of Lincoln. Her background in education provided guidance and resources for NLAC and her constituents. While on the Board, she has served as Secretary and is resigning as Vice-President.

Diaz-DeBose and her family will be moving to Denver, Col. where she will begin a new position as an assistant principal for Denver Public Schools. She has a final message, "It is with love and passion we work to strengthen our communities. I am going to dearly miss the Latino community in Nebraska and I will take what I have learned, and the passion in my soul with me as I serve the Latino community in Denver."