

COMMISSION ON LATINO-AMERICANS

ESTABLISHED IN 1972 | SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER | WWW.LATINOAC.NEBRASKA.GOV



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

Vision Statement: The vision of the Commission on Latino-Americans is that all Latino Americans have the opportunity to utilize their fullest potential to participate in the good life of Nebraska.

2021 Nebraska Legislative Session Update

The 2021 Legislative Session was from January 6 to June 10.

LB 7 (Blood) - Provide Immunity from arrest and prosecution for witnesses and victims of violent crimes, Hearing 2/5

LB 20 (Blood) - Provide insurance coverage of and Medicaid access to prescribed contraceptives, Amendment filed 3/11

LB 36 (Erdman) - Require display of the national motto in schools, Hearing 3/2

LB 53 (Lathrop) - Provide immunity for health care providers acting in conformance with the crisis standard of care during a COVID-19 state of emergency, Provisions/portions amended into LB 139 5/27

LB 62 (Kolterman) - Create the Access College Early Scholarship Cash Fund and change provisions relating to the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund, Nebraska Opportunity Grand Fund, and Community College Gap Assistance Program Fund, Indefinitely postponed 5/27

LB 64 (Lindstrom) - Change provisions relating to the taxation of social security benefits, Approved by Governor 5/26

LB 83 (Flood) - Change the Open Meetings Act to provide for virtual conferencing, Approved by Governor 4/21

LB 100 (Walz) - Prohibit certain billing practices under the Medical Assistance Act, Approved by Governor 5/26

LB 108 (McCollister) - Change provisions relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Presented to Secretary of State 5/26 - McCollister priority bill

LB 109 (Pansing Brooks) - Provide that photographing or recording a peace officer is not an obstruction of justice, Hearing 2/17

LB 120 (Hunt) - Prohibit discrimination based upon sexual orientation and gender identity, Hearing 2/26

LB 121 (Hunt) - Change provisions relating to eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, Placed on General File 3/9

LB 122 (Hunt) - Change provisions relating to the minimum wage, Hearing 2/1

LB 129 (McCollister) - Change provisions relating to eligibility for services under the Medical Assistance Act, Hearing 2/18

LB 138 (Vargas) - Require jails and law enforcement agencies to provide public notice before entering into agreements to enforce

federal immigration law, Hearing 2/3

LB 139 (Briese) - Adopt the COVID-19 Liability Protection Act, Approved by Governor 5/25 - Slama priority bill

LB 151 (Morfeld) - Adopt the Prosecutorial Transparency Act, Hearing 2/3

LB 153 (Wayne) - Include virtual school students in the state aid to schools formula, Hearing 1/25

LB 154 (Wayne) - Require tracking of student discipline as prescribed, Approved by Governor 5/5

LB 158 (Wayne) - Provide for restoration of voting rights upon completion of a felony sentence or probation for a felony, Hearing 2/24

LB 170 (M. Hansen) - Change provisions relating to the date when compensation begins under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act, Bill Withdrawn 1/22

LB 183 (Hunt) - Adopt the Sexual Assault Emergency Care Act and provide for discipline against a hospital's license, Amendments filed 2/16 & 3/9

LB 196 (Vargas) - Prohibit discrimination based on lawful source of income under the Nebraska Fair Housing Act, Hearing 2/4

LB 198 (Vargas) - Change provisions relating to the Student Discipline Act, Placed on General File with Amendment 3/15

LB 207 (McDonnell) - Change provisions relating to the date when compensation begins under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act, Hearing 3/1

LB 229 (Hunt) - Provide for enhanced penalties and a civil action for crimes committed because of a victim's gender identity or association with a person of a certain gender identity, Hearing 2/24

LB 231 (Hunt) - Prohibit conversion therapy, Amendment filed 2/26

LB 241 (Vargas) - Adopt the Meatpacking Employee's COVID-19 Protection Act, Bracket until June 10, 2021 5/18 - Vargas Priority Bill

LB 247 (Pansing Brooks) - Create the Mental Health Crisis Hotline Task Force, Approved by Governor 5/24 - Speaker Priority Bill

LB 258 (Vargas) - Adopt the Healthy and Safe Families and Workplaces Act, Failed to advance to Enrollment & Review Initial 5/10

LB 262 (Vargas) - Provide for participation in the bridge to independence

Continued on Page 4



Lazaro Arturo Spindola
NCLA Executive Director

Commission on Latino-Americans Commissioners

Yesenia Peck (Chair)

Aida Evans (Vice Chair)

Leticia Rodriguez (Secretary)

Adriana Carvajal

Cristina Castro-Matukewicz

Jamie Suarez

Maria Whitmore

NCLA Staff

Lazaro Arturo Spindola, M.D.
Executive Director

Victoria Morehead
Public Information Officer

Dora Lima
Staff Assistant

Visit Our Website:
www.latinoac.nebraska.gov

A Message from the Executive Director

The year 2020 was particularly difficult on Hispanic/Latinos. We were heavily represented among the essential workers. Food processing industry, elderly living facilities, healthcare workers, first responders, and a myriad of other occupations that brought along a high exposure and contamination rate due to poor understanding of the virus and transmission mechanism, conflicting information from local health departments and the government agencies, the refusal by the Federal Government to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation and the delegation of preventive measures to the individual states.

All these factors, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, contributed to the high death toll among Latinos. The U.S. population recently rose to 18.5% Latinos: As of June 9, 2021, 108,181 have died due to COVID-19 which accounts for 18.6% of all COVID-19 deaths.

The Latino population also suffers from inequities in income, healthcare access, access to food, and has higher poverty rates. Very few Latinos could work from home. Latinos lost jobs, depended on government assistance more than ever, faced job insecurities, and Latino children were tasked with distal learning when many of them lacked the necessary resources.

To top it all, the nation was submerged into one of the most divided and controversial elections in history.

Luckily, our better understanding of the virus, and the development of effective vaccines has reduced the risk of infection and death considerably. Latinos need to get vaccinated as many and as soon as possible, it is not wise to have escaped the initial surge in the pandemic, just to get infected and possibly die now that there is an effective prevention measure.

Lazaro Spindola, Executive Director – Commission on Latino-Americans

A Pandemic for the History Books



In 2020 the COVID-19 virus shut the whole world down by mid-March. While many were lucky enough to be able to work from home, some industries were labeled as essential and were unable to telecommute. This meant workers in these industries, such as food and healthcare, still had to risk their lives to go to work to ensure that people were able to obtain the things they needed for survival. A high percentage of Latino workers are employed in essential industries, therefore our community was affected by the virus at an alarmingly disproportionate rate. Instead of recognizing the Latino workers as the heroes they are, thousands were denied relief funds from the CARES Act. In addition, in some areas meatpacking workers were denied basic services, such as haircuts, due to the fear of the workers spreading the virus in their establishments. This is unacceptable!

Here at the Nebraska Latino American Commission, we recognize and appreciate all the sacrifices made by Latino workers during this pandemic. We salute you as the heroes that you are! Thank you for all that you do.



Welcome, Commissioner Cristina Castro-Matukewicz

Cristina manages community affairs for Wells Fargo in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Indiana, Ohio and Iowa. Prior to joining Wells Fargo, Cristina was a regional manager for the Girl Scouts of Nebraska.

Originally from Barranquilla, Colombia, Cristina is the youngest in a family of 13 children. She migrated to the United States to pursue a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

Cristina has been named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Omahans and was honored by the Omaha Jaycees' with the Distinguished Community Service Award. She also received the Forty under Forty Award from the Midlands Business Journal, and participated in the Bankers Without Borders Global Fellowship Program.

Cristina currently serves on the boards of the Urban League of Nebraska and the Applied Information Management (AIM) Institute. She is



Cristina Castro Matukewicz

also former board member of the Omaha Community Foundation, Heartland Latino Leadership Conference, Marian High School, Susan G. Komen Great Plains, Latinas Unidas and the Midlands Latino Community Development Corporation.

Cristina has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the Universidad del Norte, and a specialization in Human Resources Management from the Escuela de Administracion de Negocios in Colombia. She obtained a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Bellevue University in Omaha.

Cristina has received multiple professional accreditations from organizations such as the Association of Corporate Contribution Professionals and the University of Michigan.

Please help us in welcoming Commissioner Castro-Matukewicz. We are looking forward to working with you.

Welcome, Commissioner Maria Whitmore

Maria has a Bachelor's degree in Personnel Management from the University of Guanajuato in Guanajuato, Mexico, where she grew up. She received her Master's degree in Business Education from Southern Oregon University, and Postgraduate Studies in Catholic Social Doctrine from Catholic University of America. Maria worked as a Professor of Marketing and Public Relations in the Office of Recruitment and Personnel Management, as well as the Director of Research at the University of Guanajuato. Later she served as Director of the Department of Investments in Tourism in the State of Guanajuato's Economic Development.

Maria came to rural Nebraska when she married her husband Greg. Their 5th generation family farm operation is south of Columbus. There she has the opportunity to serve her community in different



Maria Whitmore

leadership and volunteer activities. She has served as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of St. Joseph's Villa, and Secretary in the University of Nebraska Lincoln Parents Association.

When Maria came to Nebraska, she found opportunities to learn more about business and agriculture through Women in Ag and different agricultural grower groups. A native of Mexico, Maria considers herself very fortunate to become a citizen of Nebraska and the United States, and to have a great environment to raise a family and have the opportunity to help others love God, life, education, farming, Nebraska and the United States.

Please help us in welcoming Commissioner Maria Whitmore. We are looking forward to working with you.

Nebraska 2021 Legislation Continued...

program by young adults not lawfully present in the United States, Hearing 2/11

LB 284 (M. Cavanaugh) - Provide requirements regarding federal funds under the Governor's Emergency Program, Hearing 2/26

LB 290 (M. Cavanaugh) - Adopt the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act, Placed on General File 4/13

LB 298 (McDonnell) - Change provisions of the Employment Security Law relating to the disqualification of certain aliens, Placed on Select File 5/18 - McDonnell Priority Bill

LB 306 (Brandt) - Provide eligibility requirements for the low-income home energy assistance program, Presented to Secretary of State 5/26 - Brandt Priority Bill

LB 316 (J. Cavanaugh) - Change provisions relating to the limitations for post-conviction relief action, Provisions/portions amended into LB 496 5/27

LB 321 (J. Cavanaugh) - Prohibit defendant's discovery of victim's actual or perceived gender or sexual orientation as a defense to a crime, Hearing 2/26

LB 322 (Williams) - Adopt the School Safety and Security Reporting System Act, Approved by Governor 5/24

LB 323 (Walz) - Change provisions of the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act relating to pandemics, Placed on Select File with Amendment 2/24, Additional Amendment filed 2/25

LB 334 (Wayne) - Adopt the Community Work Release and Treatment Centers Act and change provisions relating to the Board of Parole, the Department of Correctional Services, and the Office of Probation Administration, Hearing 2/10

LB 356 (Hunt) - Change provisions relating to disqualification for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Hearing 2/17

LB 358 (Hunt) - Change provisions relating to retaliatory conduct by a landlord under the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act,

Hearing 1/27

LB 359 (Pansing Brooks) - Change provisions regarding multicultural education as prescribed and provide powers for the State Board of Education, Placed on General File with Amendment 3/9

LB 394 (Morfeld) - Adopt the Public Health Emergency Housing Protection Act and change deadlines for trials in actions for possession and forcible entry and detainer, Hearing 2/4

LB 416 (M. Cavanaugh) - Require implicit bias training under the Uniform Credentialing Act and provide for duties and funding relating to postpartum care and maternal health, Hearing 1/28

LB 437 (B. Hansen) - Change provisions relating to public assistance and Medicaid fraud, Placed on General File with Amendment 3/15

LB 440 (M. Hansen) - Change provisions relating to public assistance and Medicaid fraud, Placed on General File 3/12

LB 451 (McKinney) - Include characteristics associated with race, culture, and prisonhood within definition of race, including hair texture and protective hairstyles under the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act, and change provisions relating to unlawful employment practices, Approved by Governor 5/5 - McKinney Priority Bill

LB 461 (Pansing-Brooks) - Require human trafficking informational posters in casinos, Approved by Governor 4/16

LB 480 (McKinney) - Change the minimum wage as prescribed, Hearing 3/1

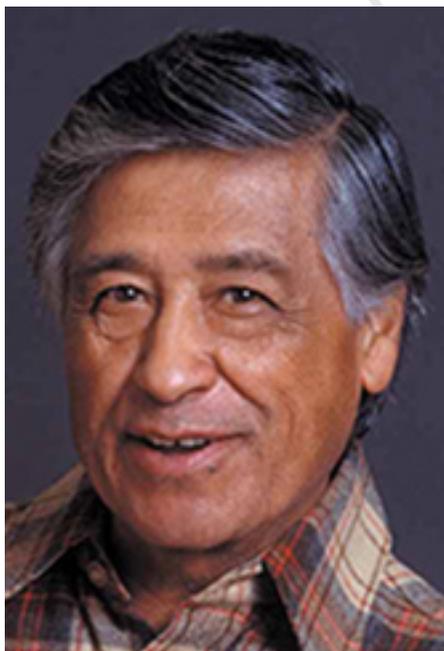
LB 481 (McKinney) - Adopt the Marijuana Conviction Clean Slate Act, decriminalize possessory marijuana and synthetic cannabinoid offenses and drug paraphernalia offenses, and change related provisions, Hearing 2/19

LB 533 (Day) - Change provisions relating to public assistance, Approved by Governor 4/7

LB 548 (Wayne) - Adopt the Nebraska Racial Justice Act and provide

Continued on Page 5

2021 Cesar Chavez Day Proclamation in Nebraska



Governor Pete Ricketts signed a Proclamation on March 16 to recognize March 31, 2021 as Cesar Chavez Day in Nebraska.

Cesar Chavez was born on a small ranch near Yuma, AZ on March 31, 1927. After serving our nation in World War II, he returned to farm labor in California and began advocating for workers' rights. In 1962, 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 United States history. Under Cesar Chavez's tireless leadership, the UFW was the first to win collective bargaining for farm workers. At its peak in the 1980's, the UFW's collective bargaining agreements covered approximately 80,000 workers across the nation. 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, and consumers. His influence has made a lasting impact on farm labor issues and inspired millions of Latinos to achieve educational and political success.



Rally Supporting Meatpacking Workers' Rights

On April 8, our Public Information Officer, Victoria, attended a community rally in support of meatpacking workers in the ongoing negotiations between UFCW Local 293 and Smithfield Foods for the new collective-bargaining contract that covers workers at its Crete, NE meatpacking plant.



Above: UFCW Local 293 Union President, Erick Reeder (in yellow) is currently in negotiations with Smithfield in Crete. They are facing push back on safety measures for workers by the company.
 Left: Victoria, our Public Information Officer, participating in the rally in support of meatpacking plant workers during the ongoing negotiations with Smithfield Foods in Crete, NE.
 Below: Participants holding a rally banner

Smithfield has refused to negotiate safety protections for COVID-19 or future pandemic events with the union, and oppose the passage of LB241, the Meatpacking Employees COVID-19 Protection Act currently under consideration in the Unicameral.

Speakers included:

Sue Martin

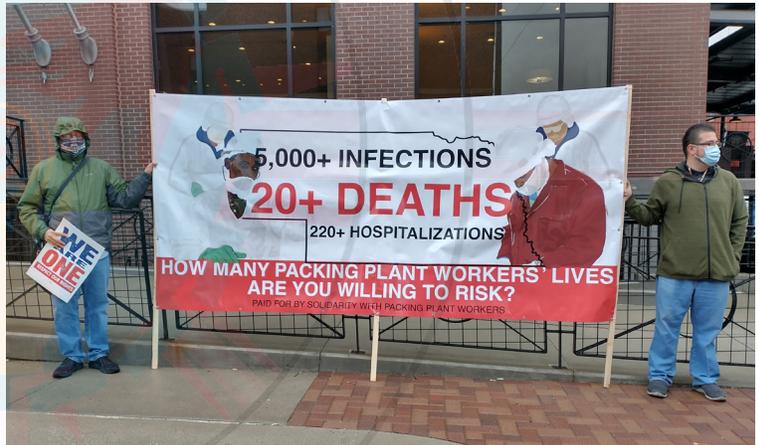
President/Secretary-Treasurer, Nebraska State AFL-CIO

Mick Devitt

Legal and Policy Coordinator, Heartland Workers Center

Eric Reeder

UFCW Local 293 Union President



Nebraska 2021 Legislation Continued...

grounds for post-conviction relief, Hearing 2/25

LB 598 (Wishart) - Adopt the Small Business Stabilization Grant Program Act, Placed on General File with Amendment 3/17

LB 601 (McKinney) - Require law enforcement agencies to maintain records regarding officer discipline and create a public database of law enforcement officer misconduct, Provisions/portions amended into LB 51 5/27

LB 631 (Bostar) - Prohibit counties from prohibiting the use of residential property as short-term rentals, Placed on General File 2/26

LB 632 (Bostar) - Provide for a low-income student or first-generation college student internship program, Hearing 3/1

LB 657 (Vargas) - Require the office of Legislative Research to prepare racial impact statements for legislative bills, Hearing 3/1

LR3CA (Slama) - Constitutional amendment to require verification of identity prior to voting, Hearing 2/17

LR10CA (M. Cavanaugh) - Constitutional amendment to remove felony convictions other than treason from being a disqualification for voting, Hearing 2/24

The following is an updated list of Legislative Resolutions NLAC has testified on or is following (Supported LR3CA and Opposed LR10CA):



Upcoming Events

- **Holiday: July 4**
Independence Day (Observed July 5)
- **Meeting: July 10**
NCLA Quarterly Meeting, Hastings
- **Proclamation: July 26**
Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day
- **Holiday: September 6**
Labor Day
- **Holiday: October 11**
Columbus Day

Contact Information

Commission on Latino-Americans
Sixth Floor, State Capitol
P.O. Box 94965
Lincoln, NE 68509-4965

Phone: 402-471-2971

Fax: 402-471-4381

Email: latino.info@nebraska.gov

Website: www.latinoac.nebraska.gov

Twitter: @NLACommission

Facebook: NebraskaLatinoAmerican-Commission

Pinterest: nlaocommission

Instagram: /in/nebraska-latino-american-commission-390100211



Prepare Today for Less Worry Tomorrow

The last year or so has been a really stressful time. It seems we have been hit with one crisis after another. It's true you never know what the future may hold, but can you still prepare for it? The answer is yes! By putting together an emergency kit you will be ready for whatever life may throw at you.

So what should you put in your kit? According to Ready.gov, some of the basics to start with are:

- Water – One gallon per person per day for several days
- Food – At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food items
- Manual can opener
- A battery powered or hand crank radio and a weather radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle – to signal for help
- Dust masks – to help filter contaminated air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties
- Wrench and/or pliers
- Local maps
- Cell phone chargers and a charged power bank

Additional items may include:

- Masks, soap, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes
- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, antacids, etc.
- Prescription glasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Copies of important documents such as insurance policies, identification, and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing and shoes for each person
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children

When assembling your kit, store items in airtight plastic bags, and put your entire kit in one or two easy to carry containers such as plastic bins or duffel bags. Make sure to store your kit in a cool, dry place, and store boxed food in a tightly closed plastic or metal container. Replace expired items as needed.

Also, remember to reevaluate your kit each year, or if there is a change in your family such as a new baby, or an adult child moving out of the house. It is a good idea to keep emergency kits at home, in the car, and in the workplace.