



Testimony: Importance of Latino Representation

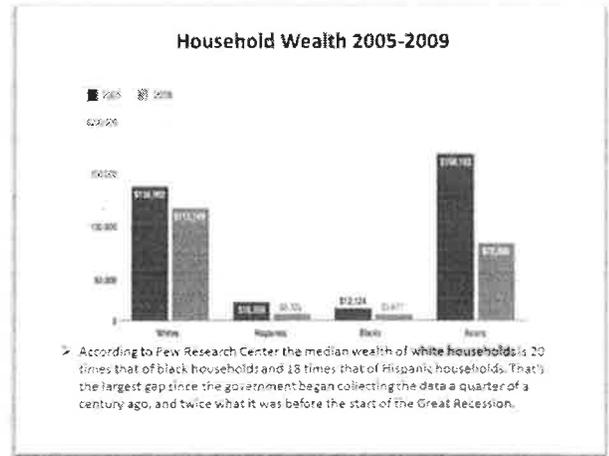
Presented by: John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas, MSW
 Board of the Latino Community Fund
www.latinocommunityfund.org
 Address: 2319 S 278th St, Federal Way, WA 98003

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The Latino Community Fund supports the creation of a new 10th Congressional district in south King County; a Congressional district in Central WA that includes Yakima and Tri-Cities; and five legislative districts that include a majority of people of color (three in King County, one in Pierce County and one in Yakima County).

At the core of the decision to support the proposal, is a concern that Washington has failed as a state to close disparities between white and non-white Washingtonians in almost every area of wellbeing (Health, Education, Juvenile Justice, Asset Development, Income, Home Ownership, etc.). We feel that that failure has roots in the lack of political representation of communities of color in the political system.

Furthermore, through the current economic crisis many of these wellbeing indicators have actually seen an increased disproportionality which has helped to stop or reverse much of the progress communities of color have made over the last 30-40 years¹.



Of Washington State's 6 million residents, nearly 1 in 4 is a person of color, a number that is expected to grow to 1 in 3 by the year 2030². Nationally, Washington State ranks 7th in the number of Asians and 12th in the number of Latinos that reside in the state.

Despite their growing numbers, communities of color do not enjoy an equal social or economic position compared to white communities. Communities of color continue to be plagued by racial disparities in home ownership, wealth accumulation, poverty, health, education, and the justice system. Some examples include:

- According to the Education Trust and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Washington State is ranked in the bottom-five of all states when it comes to closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap. At its current pace it will take 45 to 50 years to close the gap between students of color and their White counterparts³.

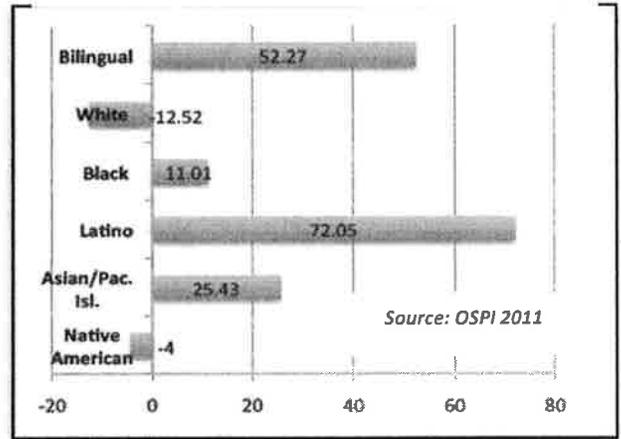
¹ Kiser Family Foundation, Report on Race and Ethnicity in Health Care <http://www.kff.org/minorityhealth/upload/7953.pdf> Center for American Progress http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/01/coc_snapshot.html

² U.S. Census Bureau <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53000.html> & Washington State Office of Financial Management <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/race/projections/press.pdf>

³ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction <http://www.k12.wa.us/Cis/pubdocs/AgapLegReport2010.pdf>

- According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in the fourth quarter of 2010 unemployment for Whites was 8.5 percent. This was considerably lower than unemployment rates among Latinos or African Americans, 12.9 percent and 15.8 percent respectively.
- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, African American men and women are much more likely to die of heart disease and stroke than their White counterparts. This is despite the existence of low-cost, highly effective preventive treatment⁴.
- According to Washington State’s Sentencing Guidelines Commission, youth of color comprise 45 percent of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration population despite comprising only 27 percent of the state’s youth population⁵.
- According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, in the third quarter of 2010 the homeownership rate for African Americans was just 45 percent. The homeownership rate for Latinos was 47 percent, while the homeownership rate for Whites was 75 percent⁶.
- According to the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, people of color in Washington State are far more likely to be living in poverty than non-Hispanic Whites.

Percent of Children of Color in Washington Public Schools



Nowhere is this issue better evidenced than in our investment in youth of color via the closing of the educational achievement gap. Between 2000 and 2010 Washington’s schools were transformed. According to data provided by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction one third of all students in Washington’s public schools are now students of color. Washington State is however ranked in the bottom-five of all states when it comes to closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap². At its current pace it will take 45 to 50 years to close the gap between students of color and their White counterparts.

If nothing changes we will close the Achievement Gap/Meet Standards in (Est.):

4 th Grade	African American	Latino	Native American
Reading	2022 (12yrs)	2022 (12yrs)	2029 (19yrs)
Math	2042 (32yrs)	2050 (40yrs)	2049 (39yrs)
10 th Grade	African American	Latino	Native American
Reading	2017 (7yrs)	2017 (7yrs)	2018 (8yrs)
Math	2064 (54yrs)	2056 (46yrs)	2058 (48yrs)

Washington’s gain of a new tenth congressional district is highly due to the growth of communities of color in the last ten years. As a “community of interest”, we deserve an opportunity to elect someone accountable and representative of the diversity of our communities in Congress and in the State Legislature.

⁴ Washington State Board of Health. Health Impact Review: Proposed Cuts to Health Care and Human Services Programs. March 31, 2009. pgs 7–8

⁵ Sentencing Guidelines Commission

http://www.sgc.wa.gov/Publications/StatisticalSummary/Juvenile_Disposition_Summary_FY2010.pdf

⁶ U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development <http://archives.hud.gov/reports/barriers.cfm>