

# Spanish Language Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2012

Lorain County Board of Elections

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** The first meeting of the Spanish Language Advisory Committee was called to order by Paul R. Adams, at 7:00 pm on Thursday, June 28, 2012.

**2. OPENING:**

Paul Adams welcomed and thanked the committee for their willingness to serve on the Spanish Language Advisory Committee. Each committee member introduced themselves and shared their election and community experiences.

**3. INTRODUCTIONS:**

- Fred Lozano is a retired steel worker, former city council official, and he also served as bailiff for a City of Lorain Municipal Judge.
- Mr. Turner is a retired Spanish language teacher and has worked as a precinct election official.
- Mildred Narvaez describes herself as a community activist, has served as an interpreter for the BOE and is currently a county employee.
- Rigoberto Reveron is a community leader who has been involved in little league, served on city council for 8 years, served on the Civil Service Commission and he has worked as a precinct election official.
- Sheila Soptelean is a Spanish and French teacher and has served as an interpreter at Sacred Heart Chapel.
- David Arredondo is a life long resident of Lorain, he is of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, and he completed post graduate work in Mexico.

Paul Adams gave an overview of the structure of the Lorain County Board of Elections and its relationship to the Secretary of State's office. Mr. Adams described how the Lorain County Board of Elections' Board authorized the formation of the Spanish Language Advisory Committee to be comprised of three Republican members and four Democratic members.

Lorain County has approximately 205,000 voters, 195 precincts, and 78 vote centers. Approximately 1,000 election workers are employed to assist with the election.

The Lorain County Board of Elections entered into an agreement with the Department of Justice in 2011. The purpose of the agreement is to enhance the services provided to address the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) voters in accordance with the Voting Rights Act, Section 4(e), which specifically requires assistance to U.S. Citizens, taught in a language other than English and who were in American Flag Schools. Paul discussed how the placement of interpreters was determined by the DOJ via a formula they created that uses last names to determine the Spanish speaking population. Mr. Lozano mentioned that those figures can be misleading due to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Hispanics and that many Filipinos have Spanish last names, but they do not speak Spanish nor are Hispanic. Reveron then agreed with this comment.

The BOE has made significant steps to come into compliance in regards to the provision of Spanish language ballots, election information and materials; however there are still improvements needed and it is hoped that the committee may assist with those deficiencies.

In preparation for the March 6, 2012 Primary Election the BOE recruited trained and deployed approximately 45 bilingual poll workers/interpreters in the city of Lorain and Sheffield Township.

James D. Kramer, Deputy Director reviewed the 2012 Election Time Line and Ballot Status with the committee. Mr. Kramer passed out the following materials:

1. Need Language Assistance?-¿Necesita Ayuda con el idioma?
2. Provisional Ballot Affirmation-Declaración de Papeleta Provisoria
3. Important Instructions-Instrucciones Importantes
4. Notification of Change of Address-Notificación de cambio de domicilio
5. Special Voting Instructions-Instrucciones especiales para votar
6. How to vote using an AccuVote-TSX-Como votar utilizando el AccuVote-TSX
7. Voting Rights Information-Informacion acerca de Los Derechos de Voto
8. Notice- (*prescribed by the Secretary of State*)- Aviso (*prescritos por el secretario de Estado*)
9. Spanish - English Glossary of election terminology
10. (Draft Copy) Official General Election Ballot for November 6, 2012-Papeleta Oficial de la Elección General

The committee members were given the opportunity to review and discuss the bilingual documents and signage that is provided to every vote center. Discussion points included the variances in vocabulary and the differences in meaning for certain terms. Fred Lozano talked about word confusion; the word for sheriff was listed as aquacil, having served as a bailiff Fred was aware that aquacil means bailiff in the Puerto Rican community. A LEP voter could possibly misinterpret the language and think that they were voting for a bailiff instead of the local county sheriff. Fred also stated that it would be very difficult and an extremely time consuming process to go over every translated word and make lots of changes. The committee members were in agreement. The members were given a draft copy of the Official General Election Ballot for November 6, 2012 that was translated by the certified translation contractors, Assist Translation Service. The committee agreed to review and proof the ballot for errors in syntax, punctuation and grammar as it relates to the local dialect. A summary with recommendations will be provided to the BOE by August 8, 2012.

#### **4. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS:**

After discussion the committee agreed that bi-partisan representation of officers was a key factor to consider. David Arredondo, a Republican, was nominated to serve as chairman of the committee; Rigoberto Reveron, a Democrat, was nominated to serve as secretary. Motion to elect Arredondo and Reveron by Lozano, seconded by Sopetelean, motion carried 6-0.

#### **5. NEXT MEETING:**

The next Spanish Language Advisory Committee is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 6, 2012, 7:00 pm.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn by Lozano at 8:40pm, seconded by Reveron, motion carried 6-0.

ATTEST:



David Arredondo, Chairman

ATTEST:



Rigoberto Reveron, Secretary