

## CHAPTER 321

AN ACT establishing the Commission on Latino and Hispanic Heritage and supplementing chapter 4 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

**BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.18A:4-47 Findings, declarations relative to Latino and Hispanic heritage cultural and educational programs.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. New Jersey is home to a significant number of people of Latino and Hispanic descent, representing 19% of the State's total population. Several municipalities in the State have Hispanic majority populations, and Latinos and Hispanics constitute one-third of the population of Newark, the largest city in the State. Parts of Hudson County, including West New York and Union City, have been nicknamed "Havana on the Hudson" for the large number of Cuban exiles and emigres living there.

b. The histories of our nation and our State have been significantly enriched by the heritage of Latinos and people of Hispanic descent. Our nation and our State have benefitted substantially from the influences and contributions of these men, women, and children and their distinctive culture, history, and heritage.

c. It is desirable to educate our citizens about the positive aspects of the culture, music, art, language, history, and people of Latino and Hispanic heritage.

d. It is the policy of the State of New Jersey that the culture, history, and heritage of people of Latino and Hispanic descent are a proper concern for all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools of this State.

e. It is appropriate and desirable that programs, workshops, institutes, seminars, and other teacher-training activities for the study of the culture, history, and heritage of people of Latino and Hispanic descent be conducted at the high schools and institutions of higher education in this State.

f. It is fitting and proper to establish a permanent State-level commission to survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of Latino and Hispanic cultural and educational programs in this State, with responsibility for the coordination of events that will provide appropriate awareness and memorialization of the culture, history, heritage, and language of people of Latino and Hispanic descent on a regular basis throughout the State.

C.18A:4-48 Commission on Latino and Hispanic Heritage.

2. a. The Commission on Latino and Hispanic Heritage is created and established in the Executive Branch of the State Government. For the purposes of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the commission is allocated within the Department of Education, but notwithstanding this allocation, the commission shall be independent of any supervision or control by the department or any board or officer thereof.

The commission shall consist of 21 members, including the Commissioner of Education and the chair of the executive board of the Presidents' Council, serving *ex officio*, and 19 public members.

Public members shall be appointed as follows: five public members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, at least one of whom shall have a Masters' degree in an area of Latino or Hispanic studies or culture; five public members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, at least one of whom shall have a Masters' degree in an area of Latino or Hispanic studies or culture; and nine public members shall be appointed by the

Governor, no less than four of whom shall at the time of their appointment have at least a Masters' degree in an area of Latino or Hispanic studies or culture. The public members shall be residents of the State who have served prominently as spokespersons for, or as leaders of, organizations in the Latino or Hispanic heritage community which serve members of religious, ethnic, national heritage, or social groups or who are experienced in the field of Latino or Hispanic heritage education. To the greatest extent practicable, they shall be chosen with due regard to provide the commission with broad regional representation and ethnic diversity. At least one-half of the public members shall be of Latino or Hispanic descent.

b. Each public member of the commission shall serve for a term of three years, except that of the initial members appointed: one member appointed by the President of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and two members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of one year; two members appointed by the President of the Senate, two members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and three members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of two years; and two members appointed by the President of the Senate, two members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and four members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of three years. Public members shall be eligible for reappointment and shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified. The term of the successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from the expiration of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, but for the unexpired term only.

c. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

d. The commission annually shall elect a chairperson from among its members. It shall meet upon the call of the chair or of a majority of the commission members. The presence of a majority of the authorized membership of the commission shall be required for the conduct of official business.

e. The commission shall appoint an executive director, who shall serve at its pleasure and shall be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office.

#### C.18A:4-49 Responsibilities, duties of commission.

3. The commission shall have the following responsibilities and duties:

a. To provide, based upon the collective knowledge and experience of its members, assistance and advice to the public and nonpublic schools of this State with respect to the implementation of cultural and educational programs concerning people of Latino and Hispanic descent;

b. To meet with county and local school officials and other interested public and private organizations, for the purpose of assisting with the planning, coordination, or modification of courses of study dealing with issues, matters and subjects concerning or relating to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Latino and Hispanic descent;

c. To survey and catalog the extent and breadth of Latino and Hispanic heritage cultural awareness and educational programs presently being incorporated into the curricula and taught in the school systems of this State; to inventory those Latino and Hispanic heritage exhibits and resources which may be incorporated into courses of study at various locations throughout the State and, upon request, to assist the Department of Education and other educational agencies in the development and implementation of Latino and Hispanic heritage

cultural awareness and educational programs. In furtherance of this responsibility, the commission shall be authorized to contact and cooperate with existing Latino and Hispanic heritage public or private nonprofit resource organizations and may act as a liaison concerning issues and topics involving and relating to the culture, history, and heritage of Latinos and Hispanics to members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly;

d. To compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms, seminars, and workshops on subjects concerning and relating to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Latino and Hispanic descent. These volunteers may be scholars, clergymen, community relations professionals, and other persons who, by virtue of their experience, training, or interest, have acquired personal or academic knowledge of the culture, history, and heritage of Latinos and Hispanics and who are willing to share that knowledge with students and teachers;

e. To coordinate events observing the culture, history, and heritage of people of Latino and Hispanic descent and to seek volunteers who are willing and able to participate in commemorative events that will enhance student awareness of the significance of the culture, history, and heritage of Latinos and Hispanics;

f. To prepare reports for the Governor and the Legislature regarding its findings and recommendations to facilitate the inclusion of Latino and Hispanic heritage studies and special programs memorializing the culture, history, and heritage of Latinos and Hispanics in the educational system of this State; and

g. To develop, in consultation with the Department of Education, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of subjects and topics concerning and relating to the culture, history, and heritage of people of Latino and Hispanic descent. To the greatest extent practicable, each board of education shall incorporate those guidelines as part of the curriculum for its district's elementary and secondary school students.

C.18A:4-50 Authority of commission.

4. a. The commission is authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of the State, or of any county, municipality, or school district of the State, to supply such data, program reports and other information, personnel, and assistance as it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities under this act.

b. These departments, offices, divisions, and agencies shall, to the extent possible, and not inconsistent with any other law of this State, cooperate with the commission and shall furnish it with such information, personnel, and assistance as may be necessary or helpful to accomplish the purposes of this act.

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 13, 2020.