



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

9820 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 237 ■ Columbia, Maryland 21046 ■ 410-313-6430

Lonnie R. Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer

Voice/Relay

Yolanda F. Sonnier, Administrator, Office of Human Rights & Equity
ysonnier@howardcountymd.gov

FAX 410-313-6468

Subject: Written Testimony regarding the creation of La Alianza Latina Commission

To: Lonnie R. Robbins,
Chief Administrative Officer

From: Yolanda F. Sonnier, Administrator *YFS*
Office of Human Rights and Equity

Date: June 16, 2022

The Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE) is in support of the creation of La Alianza Latina Commission which will be contained in the Howard County Code, Section 12.219.

In August 2020, County Executive Ball created La Alianza Latina Workgroup with a mission of evaluating systemic and programmatic needs for Latinos in Howard County and to provide recommendations. The workgroup members' initial discussion was the name of the workgroup and after several suggestions and deliberation, the workgroup members voted and agreed on the name recommendation of La Alianza Latina Workgroup.

The workgroup was fortunate to have dedicated community members who examined issues relating to representation, access and equitable outcomes for the Latino community during the eighteen (18) months the workgroup was active. The workgroup issued its final report in March 2022 providing nine (9) recommendations to the County Executive. One of the recommendations was to establish the workgroup as a permanent commission in Howard County Government.

Establishing this body as a commission will ensure there is consistent representation to advance opportunities for Latino individuals and families in Howard County and work in partnership with County leadership, departments and the community at large to reduce the systemic inequities affecting Latino residents.

In Howard County, where we are proud of our diversity, we must continue to strive to ensure all our residents are included, have access to services, feel welcomed and have equitable opportunities. The establishment of this commission will not only ensure empowerment and education to the Latino community but will make great strides towards improving our entire county.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The 1st year of this Commission will probably be setting priorities, examining continuing community needs and establishing the plan for outreach, events, trainings and other programming. Any expenses of the commission in FY23 will be covered by OHRE's budget.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email, ysonnier@howardcountymd.gov or by phone at 410-313-6430.