

**Hispanic Council on Federal Employment  
First Public Meeting, 02/11/2011**

On February 11, 2011, the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment held its first meeting at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in Washington, D.C. Ms. Elizabeth Montoya (Chief of Staff, OPM) and Mr. John Sepúlveda (Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)) co-chaired the meeting.

The following Council members also attended:

Member Name	Member Title
Ms. Katherine Archuleta	Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Labor
Mr. Dexter Brooks	Director of Federal Sector Programs, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Ms. Sylvia Chavez-Metoyer	Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, National Image, Inc.
Mr. Al Gallegos	National President, National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
Ms. Elisa Montoya	White House Liaison/Senior Advisor to Office of the Director, Peace Corps
Ms. Cecilia Muñoz	Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, White House
Mr. Roger Rivera	President, National Hispanic Environmental Council
Mr. Armando Rodriguez	Chair, National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers
Dr. Carlos Santiago	President and Chief Executive Officer, Hispanic College Fund
Mr. Gene Sexton	Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, U.S. Department of Labor
Mr. Dan Solis	President and Chief Executive Officer, National Organization for Mexican-American Rights
Mr. Pat Tamburrino	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civilian Personnel Policy, U.S. Department of Defense
Ms. Zuraya Tapia-Hadley	Executive Director, Hispanic National Bar Association
Mr. John Trasviña	Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Ms. Maria Elena Vivas-House	Executive Director, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Dr. Reginald Wells	Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources, U.S. Social Security Administration

Mr. William Gil , Vice President, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), sat in for Ms. Esther Aguilera, President, CHCI.

Ms. Ida Hernandez sat in for Mr. Gilbert Sandate, Chairman, Coalition for Fairness for Hispanics in Government.

Ms. Gloria Montaña-Greene (Director, Washington, DC, Office), National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO), sat in for Ms. Sylvia Garcia, President, NALEO.

About 67 members of the public also attended the meeting, including 2 representatives from the media.

### **Agenda Item I: Welcome and Opening Remarks**

At 2:08 p.m., OPM Deputy Director Ms. Christine Griffin welcomed the Council members and audience. She said the meeting would begin with a video of OPM Director John Berry, who while unable to attend the meeting wanted to make sure the Council members heard his message of enthusiasm.

The video began. Mr. Berry said that he was on travel today and could not attend the meeting. He said he was very excited that the Council members were now assembled and ready to begin helping to build a workforce that looks more like America. He pointed out that the Council is composed of prominent Hispanic leaders, and he enthusiastically recognized Co-Chairs Montoya and Sepúlveda. He added that Co-Chair Sepúlveda is his good friend and Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) of the Year. Mr. Berry also recognized Ms. Veronica Villalobos, Director of the OPM Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and said her office would provide support for the Council's efforts.

Mr. Berry said the Council's charge is to improve the Federal Government's recruitment and retention of Hispanics and to ensure that, once in Government, they have a chance to succeed. He told the Council members that the Federal Government needs the best and brightest from their communities. He added that Hispanics comprise 13 percent of the U.S. labor force but only 8 percent of the Federal workforce, and that the Council needs to identify and remove barriers contributing to this disparity. In closing, he said that only with a workforce that looks like America can the Government perform at its best, and that his intention is that the Council will help build such a workforce. He thanked the Council members, and said, "Let's get to work."

Ms. Griffin introduced Ms. Muñoz, and added that Ms. Muñoz's commitment to diversity in the Federal workforce is well established and has the full support of President Obama.

Ms. Muñoz greeted everyone and said, "It's great to be here." She said it was clear from the level of attendance that the Council's work has much interest. She said she looked around the room and saw people who throughout their careers had been very much committed to building a workforce that looks like America. She said the Council would be "a great bunch of people to work on this." She said that in the members' efforts through the years they had clearly "made the case," and that now the case would be advanced. She said that Mr. Berry's commitment was obvious from his having sent in the "A" Team. She said, "We all know how important this is," that many people had spent a lot of time knocking on the door to get to the table, and "now here we are." She said that now the hard part would begin. She added, "It's not just getting to the table but what we do while at the table."

Ms. Muñoz said the Council's efforts should lead to empirical results, and that "this is the point." She said that the Council's opportunity to make a difference was incredibly exciting, and that diversity in the workforce is something President Obama cares about very deeply. She said it will be important for the Council to show it has reached milestones through its efforts. "We

want to be able to tell a really good story.” In conclusion, she thanked the Council members for their commitment to the work ahead, and then she turned the floor over to Ms. Griffin.

## **Agenda Item II: Introduction of Council Members**

Ms. Griffin asked the Council members to introduce themselves, and they did so, each Council member briefly providing his/her name and title (see chart above). After the introductions, Ms. Griffin began the next agenda item.

## **Agenda Item III: Current OPM Programs**

Ms. Griffin said she wanted to make the Council members aware of some relevant OPM work in progress, which the Council can keep in mind as it works to help build a workforce that truly represents America. She discussed recent initiatives of importance to the Government’s efforts to build an inclusive and diverse workforce.

Ms. Griffin summarized recent progress in Federal hiring reform. She said that on May 11, 2010, President Obama issued the memo “Improving the Federal Recruiting and Hiring Process,” which called for agencies to overhaul the way they recruit and hire the Federal civilian workforce. Ms. Griffin said that since the Presidential memorandum was issued, the hiring process has become more streamlined, enabling agencies to hire the people they need more quickly. As an example of recent improvements in the hiring process, she mentioned that knowledge, skill, and ability statements are no longer required as part of an application for Federal employment and that now applications are résumé-based.

Ms. Griffin discussed the Veterans Employment Initiative. She mentioned Executive Order (EO) 13518, “Employment of Veterans in the Federal Government,” which stated as Administration policy a commitment to enhance recruitment of and promote employment opportunities for veterans within the Executive branch, consistent with merit system principles and veterans' preferences prescribed by law. She said that the EO established an Interagency Council on Veterans Employment (ICVE), and she mentioned that Co-Chair Sepúlveda is on the Council’s Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing leadership, accountability, and strategic direction to the ICVE. She said that a veterans program office had been established at OPM. As an example of how well the Veteran’s Initiative was working, she cited recent data showing 11,000 fewer hires but 2,000 more veteran hires than in the previous year.

Ms. Griffin discussed efforts undertaken since the issuance of Executive Order 13548, “Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities,” to hire more people with disabilities. She said these efforts are relevant to the Council’s work, since disability does not discriminate and all racial and ethnic groups are represented in the community of people with disabilities. She mentioned that agencies have until March 8, 2011, to submit their plans to OPM for increasing employment of people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Director Berry’s Memorandum to heads of Executive Departments and Agencies “Model Strategies for Recruitment and Hiring of People with Disabilities as Required under Executive Order 13548,” which is posted on the CHCO website at <http://www.chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=3228>.

Ms. Griffin said that three offices had been established at OPM whose work would contribute to a diverse and inclusive Federal workforce—

- Diversity and Inclusion,
- Executive Resources and Employee Development, and
- Student Programs.

Ms. Griffin said these three offices provide resources that would be of interest in the Council's efforts; for example, the Student Programs office helps the Government to be competitive in tapping the talent available in students and recent graduates, a potentially rich source of highly skilled and capable young Hispanics. She mentioned EO 13562, "Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates," which requires the Federal Government to—

- offer clear paths to Federal internships for students from high school through post-graduate school;
- offer clear paths to civil service careers for recent graduates; and
- provide meaningful training, mentoring, and career development opportunities.

Ms. Griffin said that the initiatives she had discussed were important to efforts to ensure that the Federal Government gets the best and brightest people and builds a diverse workforce. She then turned the floor over to Co-Chair Montoya.

#### **Agenda Item IV: Purpose of the Council**

Co-Chair Montoya said she was delighted to serve on the Council. She said she saw a lot of familiar faces, some of people she had worked with for a very long time on issues of great importance to the Hispanic community. She said it was great to be in the thinking stages, to be planning how to "move the initiative along." She then turned the floor over to Co-Chair Sepúlveda.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda welcomed everyone. He said he had worked with a number of the Council members over the years, some of whom are colleagues on the CHCO Council. He said the intention behind the design of the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment was to have a mix of people consisting of both National representatives from Hispanic organizations and also "people involved in running Federal agencies." He said that as he looked around he could see such a mix. He mentioned that Co-Chair Montoya was "a dear friend," and that he welcomed the opportunity to work further with Ms. Griffin, a respected colleague and a powerful advocate for diversity and inclusion. He said Ms. Griffin will give the Council "a lot of firepower in OPM and across Government."

Co-Chair Sepúlveda said he wanted to tell a story. He said that in the late 1990s he was the Deputy Director of OPM. When he left OPM, the Federal workforce was about 6.5 percent

Hispanic. He said that in the years since that time the number had grown only to about 8 percent, still considerably short of 13 percent, the approximate percent of the overall civilian workforce that is Hispanic. He said that while the Hispanic community had grown substantially and continued to grow, the growth of the Hispanic segment of the Federal workforce was considerably less. He said he found this unacceptable.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda said the problem is not a need for more studies or reports. He said that more EOs and directives may not be needed either, since “those are already in place.” He said that the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the Federal workforce is a problem going way back, maybe as far as 30 years. He said there were many reports to Congress, to OPM, from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), etc. He said it was time to focus on the barriers to full inclusion of the Hispanic community, and that he was very excited to be working with the Council now toward that end, with a charge from OPM Director Berry to move forward, and with the full support of the Obama Administration. He said, “Now is the time to really go at the barriers, not talk about studies.”

Co-Chair Sepúlveda said the Council is a command center for action. He asked the Council to identify the barriers to full inclusion of the Hispanic community. He said, “Let’s identify the barriers, the policy barriers, the leadership barriers, the educational barriers.” He said it was time not to focus on the past but to identify and eliminate barriers between the Hispanic community and successful careers in the Federal Government. He added that the Council may not be able to eliminate all of the barriers and might not be able to tackle 10 barriers right now but could focus on 3 or 4 once they are identified. He said, “This is about action,” and he added he was happy and proud to begin this important undertaking with his distinguished colleagues. He said he looked forward to working with everyone, and then he turned the floor over to Co-Chair Montoya.

#### **Agenda Item V: Council’s Goals and Objectives**

Addressing the Council, Co-Chair Montoya said, “We’re here. We want to listen to you.” She said the Council’s efforts depended on the members’ recommendations and advice. She said the Council could greatly benefit from knowing what the members’ communities were saying about Federal employment. She said she would like to hear from the members regarding two questions:

- 1) what the Council will accomplish, and
- 2) how the Council will make a difference.

She said that she would like the Council to go around the room and hear from each member on the two questions. She said the members should let everyone know what they thought should come out of the Council’s work. She said the Council was not here to produce yet another report that just sits on a shelf. She asked the members to try to think of what three or four major things should be accomplished. She said, “Let’s focus. We’ve all been through this before, and we really want to make a difference.” She then asked that that Mr. Sexton be the first member to

contribute. The Council members are listed below, with a summary of their contributions in this exercise.

Mr. Gene Sexton, Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, U.S. Department of Labor

Mr. Sexton said he knew the focus so far had been mainly on recruitment and retention, but that he would like to add a third leg to the stool, leadership development (suggesting the Council consider ways to develop Hispanic leaders in the Federal Government). He said he also thought, based on his more than 30 years of human resources experience, that the Council should consider some type of Governmentwide bonus for jobs requiring a second language other than English. He said that currently additional compensation for language skills is applied unevenly in the Federal Government, and he said the paperwork is often very intensive.

Ms. Zuraya Tapia-Hadley, Executive Director, Hispanic National Bar Association

Ms. Tapia-Hadley suggested that, as an aid to recruitment, the Council consider how better to inform the Hispanic community about Federal jobs when they become available. She said a question she often hears is, “How do you know when positions are available?” She said she believed the Council could make a difference in getting the answer to that question out to the Hispanic community, which would help with recruitment.

Ms. Tapia-Hadley said the Council should also consider mentorship as an important tool for the development of Hispanic leaders. She said that the Hispanic National Bar Association had recently completed a study on the status of Latinas in the legal profession, and that one finding of the study was that the problem of the underrepresentation of Latinas in the legal profession can be explained in part by a lack of influential Latina mentors. She said the Council might consider how to provide mentors to potential leaders in the Hispanic community in a more structured way.

Mr. John Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

Mr. Trasviña began by commending OPM. He said OPM Director Berry was true to his word. Mr. Trasviña recalled a speech Mr. Berry gave in Albuquerque, NM, last summer in which he pledged his commitment to full inclusion of Hispanics throughout the Federal Government. Mr. Trasviña said this Council was an outgrowth of the Administration’s pledge to the cause. He said that, regarding issues the Council should focus on, the challenge now was the same as in the 1960s, how best to recruit and retain in order to have an effective Federal workforce that looks like America.

Mr. Trasviña said the Council’s focus for how to recruit must begin earlier than with the posting of a job announcement. He suggested the Council think of ways to tap Hispanic talent before a job is announced. As an example, he said that the Department of Housing and Urban Development had used bilingual/bicultural hiring authority and had successfully recruited qualified applicants for jobs requiring proficiency in a second language.

Mr. Trasviña stressed the importance of providing for future Hispanic leaders. He said that in order to help the Government retain Hispanics with leadership potential and develop Hispanic

leaders, the Council should consider how to make Hispanics feel welcome and respected once they are on board. He added that the Council should also think of ways to include young Hispanics in the next generation of Federal employees.

Ms. Sylvia Chavez-Metoyer, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, National Image, Inc.

Ms. Chavez-Metoyer said she had thoughts similar to Mr. Sexton's regarding the need for leadership development. She said the Council should think of ways to increase Hispanic representation in the Senior Executive Service (SES), including leadership development strategies. She said that the Council's efforts should be aimed at increasing the recruitment and retention of Hispanics at all levels, including top positions.

Mr. Armando Rodriguez, Chair, National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers

Mr. Rodriguez said that the Council should resurrect the Hispanic Employment Program created and sponsored by OPM, which included the concept of agency representatives who function as Hispanic Employment Program Managers (HEPMs). Mr. Rodriguez said the program "has pretty much gone away," and that if there are any HEPMs left at agencies, the responsibilities are viewed as collateral duties, and the individuals performing the duties are not prepared to ensure the program is fully utilized. He recommended a certification system for the HEPMs to ensure they are professional and fully equipped to handle the responsibility.

Mr. Rodriguez said it would be important for the Council to think about what can be done in terms of accountability. He said the Council can tell agencies to do things, but without accountability the agencies will have no incentive to comply.

Co-Chair Montoya asked Mr. Rodriguez to provide a little background information on HEPMs and to elaborate a little on the erosion of the HEPM function he had described. Mr. Rodriguez said that under the Nixon Administration there was a 16-point plan to address the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the Federal Government, and that there were Federal Personnel Manual letters issued to report on the progress of implementing the plan. He said that the Hispanic Employment Program was an outgrowth of the 16-point plan, and that part of the Hispanic Employment Program was the creation of agency HEPMs. He said that over the years OPM had restructured a number of times and now played a diminished role in ensuring sufficient Hispanic Employment Program management in agencies. Agencies now often have the perception that the HEPM function is no longer needed. He said that one need only look at recent Hispanic employment reports to tell that current program management is inadequate.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda commented that he agreed it is important to have HEPMs in agencies. He said that if an agency has a fully trained HEPM that individual is in the best position to tell the agency how to reach out to the Hispanic community for qualified applicants and how to make those people feel respected once they are on board. He said that HEPMs are "critical to the chain of execution."

Mr. Rodriguez resumed his description of HEPM positions as they were in the past. He said HEPMs were usually at the GS-15 level and responsible for working with agency human

resource offices to identify appropriate Hispanic staffing goals and to ensure those goals were met. He said HEPMs also ensured agencies took measures to maximize the retention of and leadership opportunities for Hispanic employees. He said, “This is no longer happening, and there’s still a major, major need.” He said that HEPMs can help agencies recruit and retain Hispanics and help make them feel welcome and respected.

Mr. Al Gallegos, President, National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives

Mr. Gallegos said the Council should not just create reports but should focus on practical application and figure out what to do. He said that one serious problem is that Hispanics tend to top out now at about the GS-14 level. He said that one way to develop more Hispanic executives might be to lower the entry level for executive training programs to the GS-14 level. He added, “Also, selection boards need to look more like America. Let’s have a couple of Hispanics.”

Mr. Gallegos said that in order to prepare more Hispanics for the SES, the Council should think about how to educate the Hispanic community on what the SES is. He added that getting the word out about the SES should include “getting it down to people to the branch level and to people in the field.” Making the point that career Federal employees are a potential source for more Hispanic SES members, he said, “I commend political SESers but what about Hispanics who give their lives to Federal service?”

Mr. Dan Solis, Chair, National Association for Mexican-American Rights

Mr. Solis said, “It is essential and critical that Hispanics be at the senior policymaking levels in Federal agencies.” He said that in order to reach this goal the Government needs to look inward and identify and eliminate any barriers. He said that in making recommendations to develop more Hispanic leaders the Council should look at where the Government has been successful before and determine how best practices can be applied. He pointed out that an increase in opportunities for Hispanics at the top could help Hispanics at lower levels too, as employees vacate jobs for higher positions.

Mr. Solis said he agreed with Mr. Rodriguez’s suggestion to revitalize the Hispanic Employment Program and to have Hispanic Employment Program Managers in agencies. He said there needs to be a point person at each agency, and he agreed with Mr. Rodriguez that there had been some progress in years past but that now there was an urgent need to get things going again.

Mr. Solis recommended the Council take a look at a report from the EEOC Federal Hispanic Working Group (<http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/reports/hwg.html>). He said he believed the report could help the Council get started in any efforts to revitalize the Hispanic Employment Program.

Dr. Reginald Wells, Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources, Social Security Administration

Dr. Wells stressed the importance of accountability. He said that there are plenty of best practices the Council can advocate, but that *application* of the best practices depends largely on accountability. He said the Council needs to ask the question, “Are agency heads committed to Hispanic employment and development, and are they holding their subordinates accountable?”

He said that the Social Security Administration had put a lot of work into the accountability piece. He said, “I throw my support behind ensuring that top management is very much focused on Hispanic employment issues.”

Dr. Wells said approaches taken in furtherance of Hispanic employment and development should be tailored to the needs of an agency. He said that in each case it should be considered in context how to get the agency committed to Hispanic employment, and how to make a business case to further Hispanic recruitment and retention.

Mr. Dexter Brooks, Director of Federal Sector Programs, EEOC

Mr. Brooks said that EEOC Chair Ms. Jacqueline Berrien was thrilled that the Council had formed and was beginning its work, and that she pledged her full support. He mentioned EEOC’s involvement in the Federal Hispanic Work Group (FHWG) “Report on the Hispanic Employment Challenge in the Federal Government,” and he said Veronica Villalobos had led the FHWG.<sup>2</sup> He added, “If it seems incestuous in the room it’s because it really is.”

Mr. Brooks said that a lot of good recommendations had come out of the FHWG report, but that implementing many of the recommendations fell beyond EEOC’s abilities, which was frustrating. He said that EEOC hoped that now, with the Council appointed and ready to go to work, some of the recommendations in the report can be implemented. He said that when data on Hispanic employment is provided to agencies, that is the time to inform agencies about available recruitment and retention strategies.

Co-Chair Montoya commented that Director Berry likes to say he stole Ms. Villalobos and Ms. Griffin from EEOC. She said that both women were OPM leaders who knew EEOC issues very well. She added that Ms. Griffin had served as EEOC Vice Chair and as an EEOC Commissioner.

Ms. Katherine Archuleta, Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Labor

Ms. Archuleta said that as a representative from the Department of Labor, she is “on the other side of the table, and in a position to see what hiring is.” She said that the Secretary of Labor is very concerned about diversity, but that another very important concern, which also affects diversity, is the issue of budget cuts. She said that in the context of budget cuts many workforce issues take on a whole new meaning.

Ms. Archuleta said retention would be a major challenge. She said that the Government holding on to the incredible talent it has clearly will mean working with all partners at the table, but that the hardest part might be how to meet Hispanic employment and development challenges in the

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<sup>2</sup> When the report was published, Ms. Villalobos was Chair of the Hispanic Work Group and Attorney Advisor on Hispanic Issues to the EEOC Chair.

face of budget cuts. She said that to meet this daunting challenge the input of each Council member would be critical.

Ms. Elisa Montoya, White House Liaison/Senior Advisor to Office of the Director, Peace Corps

Ms. Elisa Montoya said she was very interested in recruitment and retention, and that she would like the Council to talk at some point about how to set roots deeper into the Hispanic community. She acknowledged Ms. Archuleta's concerns about budget cuts, and she proposed the Council explore possibilities for public-private partnerships, possibly including working with boys and girls clubs. She said that recruiting of Hispanics needs to start younger.

Ms. Maria Elena Vivas-House, Executive Director, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Ms. Vivas House agreed with Ms. Tapia-Hadley that making the Hispanic community aware of job opportunities is important. She said that one problem is that while "the pipeline is there" for interns, sometimes the Government loses track of those interns. She said that often human resource offices do not know the conversion process for interns. She recommended the Council consider that problem.

Dr. Carlos Santiago, President and Chief Executive Officer, Hispanic College Fund

Dr. Santiago said that while he is new to Federal human resource issues and does not know all the acronyms, what he does know is higher education and workforce development. He added, "This is a National issue." He said that while population forecasting indicates that by 2050 one third of the Nation will be Hispanic, only about 13 percent of Hispanics hold a baccalaureate degree. He said, "There's a crisis out there."

Dr. Santiago said, "We know what works; we know how to get Latino students through the pipeline." He said there are successful programs, and he mentioned a program at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for motivating undergraduate students in science and technology careers.<sup>3</sup> He said that efforts to increase the number of highly educated Hispanics needs to begin in the ninth grade. He said the NASA program he referred to aimed to create talent rather than just recruit talent. He said the Council should also look at scholarship and intern programs and "align them to see the rate of conversion into Government employment."

Dr. Santiago suggested the Council bring in other groups to help it reach its goals. He said that while the Council and many other groups working on Hispanic employment issues all face resource issues, in unity there is strength, and the Council can be a "convening force." He said there are many groups advocating on the same issues, and if the Council could bring these groups together and get them working as a combined force the results could be excellent.

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<sup>3</sup> Possibly the Motivating Undergraduates in Science and Technology (MUST) program.

Mr. William Gil, Vice President, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute

Mr. Gil said it would be a good idea for the Council to have simple baseline data. If, since the time Co-Chair Sepúlveda left OPM, Hispanic employment had only increased by about 1.5 percentage points, it might be useful to know data such as how many positions were available, how many applicants were Hispanic, and how many of the Hispanic applicants (versus other applicants) were considered acceptable applicants, etc.

Mr. Gil said the Federal Government spends millions of dollars to pay contractors to bring interns into the Federal Government. He said that intern programs are not properly managed, and that the Federal Government needs a better tracking system to find out what happens to people once they complete their internships. He added that with a good tracking system thousands more qualified Hispanic people might be found to fill Federal jobs.

Mr. Gil said the Council should consider how the Government can better utilize existing resources. He said, for example, that the Council could consider ways to increase application of the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).<sup>4</sup> He said the Government should figure out how to work better with Hispanic organizations that are potential sources of human capital and should explore entering into partnerships with third-party programs.

Ms. Gloria Montaña-Greene, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials

Ms. Montaña-Greene said the Council should work to ensure that the Government includes Hispanics as it develops strategies for filling vacancies created as Baby Boomers retire in increasingly large numbers. She said the pool of potential applicants in the Hispanic community includes young people but also includes mid-career individuals who may never have considered Government service. She added that recruitment strategies other than USAJOBS may be necessary to attract many older, more experienced people who may not be as “online friendly.”

Ms. Montaña-Greene said that while Hispanics comprise the second largest ethnic group in the U.S., they have the lowest graduation rate. She said that outreach to Hispanic youth should start early, that outreach at colleges and universities is good, but that outreach at high schools is also important.

Ms. Montaña-Greene said that mentorship is very important, and that interns should be utilized in ways that show them Federal employment is desirable.

Ms. Ida Hernandez, Coalition for Fairness for Hispanics in Government

Ms. Hernandez said that focusing on hiring officials is key. She said that hiring officials are among the biggest barriers to Hispanic employment and development. She said that if hiring officials are not held accountable, there is really not much the Council can do. She said that without accountability and with a “volunteer system” the Council cannot hope to do anything about the crisis situation described in today’s discussions.

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<sup>4</sup> Information on the SCEP program can be found at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/EI/studentcareerexperience.asp>.

Ms. Hernandez said it is also extremely important to develop the young people brought into the Government. She said, “Young people are not as patient; they don’t want to wait 25 years to be a GS-13.” She said that many young people were very bright, and that she had three interns who were capable of working at her level now but had to be brought in at lower levels.

Mr. Roger Rivera, President, National Hispanic Environmental Council

Mr. Rivera said one way to improve Hispanic employment in the Federal Government would be through a “greater focus on the environmental sector.” He said that, within the Federal Government, environmental jobs number about 200,000 in 22 agencies, and that if the Army Corps of Engineers and contractors are counted there are about 275,000 Federal environmental jobs in about 30 agencies.

Mr. Rivera also recommended the Council consider how to achieve “greater clarity of legal issues surrounding targeted hiring of Latinos in Federal agencies.” He said that regarding Federal agencies’ understanding of what they can do legally with regard to such hiring, “there is great inconsistency, certainly in the Federal sector.” He said he had observed across Federal agencies that what agencies say they can do legally with regard to targeted hiring of Hispanics varies widely. Mr. Rivera attributed the problem he described to agencies’ offices of general counsel (OGC), and he said, “The HR people and diversity folks on the ground say that OGC says they can’t do it.” He said that many OGC offices narrowly interpret the law.

Mr. Rivera said he believed it would be worthwhile for the Council to work with agency OGC offices and with the U.S. Department of Justice to get a definitive answer on what agencies can generally do with respect to targeted hiring of Hispanics. He said he recognized that the law may allow targeted hiring to a different extent in one context than in another, but he said he did not believe that explains all the variation in what agencies say they can and cannot do in terms of targeted hiring of Hispanics.

Mr. Pat Tamburrino, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civilian Personnel Policy, Department of Defense

Mr. Tamburrino agreed with Ms. Hernandez about the importance of holding hiring officials accountable. He said that the Department of Defense (DOD) embraces accountability and that it is very much part of DOD culture to do what the Administration says. He said the Council cannot succeed in its efforts unless it embraces accountability as its number one precept.

Mr. Tamburrino said he had come into his current position with 30 years of experience in managing acquisitions for the Department of the Navy. He said, “Hiring managers are too busy. They don’t think about this and don’t know about all the fantastic resources there are.” He said the Council would do well to think of ways to help hiring managers find out about currently available tools. He said that hiring managers would greatly benefit from such information, since in many cases they might find answers to skill shortages their organizations face.

Mr. Tamburrino said that rulemaking is very important, an observation that he said goes to Mr. Rivera’s remarks about varying interpretation of the law and its effect on Hispanic hiring. He

added that any rulemaking needs to have the hiring manager in mind and not so much the human resources professional. He said rules need to favor hiring managers so that they can get the people they need.

### **Agenda Item VI: Next Steps/Closing Remarks**

Co-Chair Montoya thanked the Council members for their comments and suggestions. She said the Council was fortunate to have four key people who could help the Council take full advantage of the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs) Council. She said two of the Council members, Mr. Tamburrino and Mr. Sepúlveda, are CHCOs from the two largest agencies, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. She added that Mr. Sexton is a Deputy CHCO, and that Ms. Kathryn Medina, Executive Director of the CHCO Council, would also be available to help the Council in its efforts. Co-Chair Montoya said that since Ms. Medina manages CHCO Council affairs and communicates with CHCOs on a regular basis, she knows them all very well. Co-Chair Montoya encouraged the Council members to meet with Ms. Medina as needed, and asked that the Council members to consider the CHCO Council an excellent resource to use in the work ahead.

Co-Chair Montoya listed some of the key points she heard from Council members during the exercise to start identifying the Council's goals and objectives, e.g. EEOC reports, budget concerns, use of best practices, hiring of interns, accountability, data analysis to inform the Council's efforts, hiring managers, legal issues, OGC interpretation of targeted recruitment of Hispanics, etc. She turned the floor over to Co-Chair Sepúlveda.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda said there had been much good discussion today, but that “the hard part would be getting down to three or four strategic things we can do.” He said he had heard a large number of major barriers to Hispanic hiring and development.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda briefly discussed a number of the important issues raised during the meeting, including—

- conversion of interns,
- the need for the Government to work in partnership with schools,
- how to recruit more Hispanics for science and technology careers,
- how to prepare more Hispanics for senior leadership positions,
- mentoring, and
- interpretation of the law.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda said one important comment he had heard was that “the pipeline is there” to hire qualified Hispanics. He said, “One excuse I hear is we can't find them. That's

unacceptable. They aren't looking." He said the suggestion about developing Hispanics for SES membership is very important and he agreed that mentoring is critical.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda agreed that utilizing other Hispanic organizations to further the Council's efforts is a good idea.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda said that what had really resonated with him was what Mr. Rivera said about the need for correct and consistent interpretation of the law. He said that a comprehensive approach is needed across Government.

Co-Chair Sepúlveda said the Council would need to narrow its focus down to fewer issues. He said it is very important that the Council work as a team, and that in order to improve Hispanic hiring and development the Council members in some cases would have to leave some of their separate agenda items at the door. He said the Council would need to operate as a command center, "with a common focus to move forward."

Co-Chair Sepúlveda discussed OPM's role. He said, "People assume OPM can make it so." He said that OPM can help agencies get what they need, e.g. provide guidance, policy, and leadership, but that agencies have to follow through. He said, "We have to ensure that happens."

Co-Chair Montoya added a few more remarks about the Council members' recommendations for goals. She said there is no question that accountability is an overarching goal. She said she had forgotten to mention the idea about additional pay for jobs requiring a second language. She said she agreed that SES Candidate Development Programs are a very important part of becoming an SES member. Regarding internships, she said that EO 13562, "Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates," had been signed by the President on December 27, 2010. She said that part of the impact of the EO would be that the Presidential Management Fellows Program would be "getting a rebrush," probably in time for recruiting in Fall 2011.<sup>5</sup>

In closing Agenda Item VI, Co-Chair Montoya said that the Council members had a copy of draft Council by-laws in their meeting folders. She said it was a first draft, and that the Council members should take a look and feel free to suggest changes. She said that the intention is that the Council will meet every other month. She then opened the floor up for public comment.

### **Agenda Item VII: Public Remarks**

Seven people signed up to address the Council. Co-Chair Montoya asked that speakers complete their remarks in three minutes or less. A summary of remarks is provided below for each speaker.

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<sup>5</sup> The Presidential Management Fellows Web site has a note at <http://www.pmf.gov/news-events/executive-order-13562.aspx> mentioning that the program is affected and saying it will take several months to promulgate new regulations.

Ms. Maria S. Calixto-Lobo

Ms. Calixto-Lobo said that her parents were Salvadorean and that she had grown up in Washington, DC, and attended its public schools. She said she had wanted to be a Federal employee for a long time, and that she had applied unsuccessfully for a number of Federal jobs over the past 3 years.

Ms. Calixto-Lobo said that in its discussions the Council had covered just about everything she wanted to say. She said she agreed that accountability and leadership are very important. She said she also agreed that the hiring manager is a very important factor in Hispanic employment and development, that mentoring is important, and that job applicants “should be graded on skills and not ethnicity.” She said she believed part of the reason she had not yet been hired for a Federal job is that hiring managers react unfavorably when they see her Hispanic name.

Ms. Calixto-Lobo said that she hoped by learning from the Council she can find her way to a Federal job. She said her master’s thesis is on recruiting more minorities into higher education. She said that her love was human resources, and that she hoped to earn *Professional in Human Resources* certification. She thanked the Council.

Mr. Albert Arias

Mr. Arias said he works for the U.S. Marshalls Service as a chief inspector and that he had worked as a deputy marshall for 21 years. He said he is a representative of the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA), and he provided a URL for the organization (<http://www.hapcoa.org>). He said that more than half of the members were Federal employees, and he said that regarding the Council’s desire to collaborate with other Hispanic organizations, he said, “We’re here. Use us.”

Mr. Arias said that he found that Federal law enforcement managers have no problem keeping Hispanics in mind to deal with law enforcement and border issues, “but not so much when it comes time for promotions.” He said, “We will be reaching out to you all,” and he thanked the Council.

Ms. Guadalupe Pacheco

Ms. Pacheco said she works for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and represents the HHS Hispanic Employee Association. She thanked the Council for convening the Council meeting and said, “Hopefully what you do will come to fruition.” She said she used to work for Dr. Wells, and she said he had been an excellent example of a non-Hispanic mentor. She said that Hispanics comprise only 3 percent of the HHS workforce, and she made the following recommendations to the Council:

1. HHS and other agencies should fully utilize the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities National Internship Program. Ms. Pacheco said that Dr. Wells had used this program, with very good results.

2. The Council should review EO 13555, “White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.” Ms. Pacheco said that the initiative created by the EO provided opportunities for recruiting more Hispanics into public service.
3. The Council should consider how the Government can outsource recruiting to Hispanic firms.
4. The Council should consider how social media can be used in its efforts. Ms. Pacheco said, “You can’t reach youth old school.”

Dr. Tanya Pagan Raggio-Ashley

Dr. Raggio-Ashley said she is a medical officer employed by the Federal Government and that she had been a Chief Medical Officer at the HHS Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). She said she had come into the medical field and eventually the Government through HRSA’s Health Careers Opportunity Program, which funds programs for the recruitment and retention of students from diverse backgrounds that are underrepresented in health care professions. Dr. Raggio-Ashley said that she is an example of what can be achieved through outreach that begins as early as the ninth grade.<sup>6</sup> She said, “The point is you can’t tell by looking. We are a rainbow of races.”

Dr. Raggio-Ashley said that while the Spanish language is important, indigenous languages are also important, and that in addition to language an understanding of culture is essential. She said that agencies need to get people to “self identify” when measurements of Hispanic employment are involved. She said, “You can’t tell by surnames.”

Dr. Raggio-Ashley said, “You need to look at educational levels.” She said that when people are hired at lower grades it may be difficult for them to be promoted. She said, “Many Latinos have Ph.D.s but are not allowed to be a supervisor or be in charge.”

Mr. Luis Toledo

Mr. Toledo said he is from Houston and works for the U.S. Department of State. He said, “Let’s not forget the Departments that aren’t here because those are generally the Departments with the biggest problems.”

Mr. Toledo said the Council needs “to engage with the private sector because there are a lot of smart Hispanics doing business across Government.” He said that, also, many Hispanics do not live in the Washington, DC, area, so the question is, “How to outreach.” He said that possibilities might include “commercials or Youtube videos that show Hispanics working in the Federal Government.”

Mr. Toledo said he agreed that the Council should keep social media in mind to reach young Hispanics.

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<sup>6</sup> A reference to Dr. Santiago’s earlier comment that recruitment of Hispanics need to begin as early as ninth grade.

Mr. Toledo said that when many young Hispanics think about working for the Federal Government, they think about working on the Hill but do not know how many other options there are, so the Council should consider how to educate young Hispanics about the many possibilities for Federal service.

Mr. Federico Dimas, Jr.

Mr. Dimas said he works for the Federal Government. He said the Council's challenge is "how to get a diverse workforce." He said he had been in the military for 22 years and worked in the Federal Government for an additional 11 years. He said, "It's difficult, getting that stellar performance evaluation." He said an important question is how to get a management position. He said, "I challenge you to get mid-career people with lots of experience to higher-level positions." He said, "It's been difficult so far, but a good learning process." He said he worked in security, where "it's difficult." He said his wife had been in the Government for 18 years, and that he had advised her to join a union. He said, "Sometimes you need mentorship and mentors."

Ms. Aida Torres

Ms. Torres said she works for the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA). She said, "I didn't hear anyone mention citizenship." She said that 5 years ago she was asked to represent NAVSEA at a recruitment effort at the University of Puerto Rico. She said she had suggested that NAVSEA try recruiting at other locations outside of the U.S., and she said NAVSEA was open to the idea initially. She said the barrier was that many potential candidates did not have a VISA. She asked the Council, "So, what can we do to help their community?" She asked the Council, "The requirement to be a U.S. citizen, should it change?" She added that many Hispanics are first generation residents of the U.S.

Ms. Torres said that the Federal Government had recruited her, and then the Government had paid for her master's degree, which she said "is proof that such things are possible."

**Agenda Item VIII: Conclusion and Adjournment**

Co-Chair Montoya thanked the speakers from the public for their remarks. She said the next meeting would be hosted at the VA in April 2011. She said a notice of the meeting would be published in the *Federal Register*. (The Federal Register notice will provide details on the scheduled time and specific VA location.) She adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

**CERTIFIED**

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Elizabeth Montoya  
Co-Chair

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John U. Sepúlveda  
Co-Chair