

**LATIN WOMEN IN ACTION, INC.**

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Good evening and thank you for giving Latin Women In Action, Inc. the opportunity to provide comments on the 08-09 state budget.

Latin Women In Action, Inc. has been in existence for 17 years. It has existed with little or no funding but providing services worth millions of dollars to the Hispanic and other minorities in the community of Corona, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and Flushing.

Since its inception we have provided services on immigration, domestic violence, child abuse and education mostly to Hispanic families. To date in Queens, there is only one Hispanic organization recently funded to provide services on Domestic Violence and another on child abuse. Yet, we cannot accept the fact that every nine seconds, a woman is physically abused in the United States and that four children die every day in the US as a result of child abuse or neglect in the hands of the parents, guardians, siblings or other relatives. Hispanic women account for 34% of the total number of abused women in this country. This is only the tip of the iceberg because the majority of cases go unreported. The number of abused Hispanic children is claimed at 11% but this is a farce. The real number of abused Hispanic children is astronomical. In my opinion about 70% or more of the children in the public school system have been abused or are being abused.

I ask Governor Spitzer and the Budget committee to take into consideration that Domestic Violence and Child Abuse cannot continue to be a myth or disguise. It is a reality that is affecting our society. Funding must be allocated to be dealt with this plague.

Most importantly, Hispanics represent 50% of the NYC population yet, the funding that is allocated to Hispanic organizations is less than 2%. How can we justify that? Our issues are not different from anybody else's. They are worse because we are immigrants. Therefore, if we want to live in a peaceful and equitable society we must take into account our population.

Funding for domestic violence, the circle of violence (child abuse) and education are drastically needed.

Thank you,

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