

Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee  
January 23, 2006

*Member Agencies:*

ASPIRA

C.A.S.A.

CASA PRAC

Cura

El Club del Barrio

Hispanic Affairs Research  
Center Monmouth County

Hispanic Family Center

Hispanic Information Center

Hispanic Institute for  
Research and Development

Hispanic Multi-Purpose  
Service Center

Hogar Infantil

La Casa de Don Pedro

Latin American Economic  
Development Association

Morris County Organization  
for Hispanic Affairs

Mercer County Hispanic  
Association

North Hudson Community  
Action Corporation

PACO

Primer Paso

P.R.O.C.E.E.D.

P.R.A.H.D.

Puerto Rican Action Board

Puerto Rican Action Committee

Puerto Rican Community Daycare  
Center

Puerto Rican Congress  
of New Jersey

Puerto Rican Family Institute

Puerto Rican Unity for Progress

SASCA

Save Latin America

Servicios Latinos de Burlington  
County

Urban Network Organization

*Associate Members:*

Immigration and American  
Citizenship Organization

Latin American Institute

Senator John H. Adler, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee

It is a great pleasure to be here in support of Governor Corzine's nomination of Zulima Farber as the next Attorney General of New Jersey. I am here representing thirty-three Hispanic organized community based agencies that serve nearly 700,000 low income people of all races and ethnicities. Our agencies provide diverse services including preschool, youth programs, senior services as well as home energy assistance, mental and primary healthcare. Our agencies are above all a safe place where families, many recent immigrants, come to seek counsel and help to prevent crises that those in our poorest population face all too frequently.

For us Zulima Farber has been an inspiration. Her service to the State is well known, but I want to speak from the viewpoint of those of us who work in the community with people who everyday struggle to overcome poverty and discrimination. What makes Zulima stand out is her presence in the community. Her ability to dialogue and listen and above all to lead, I have seen her on many occasions with diverse people in various type of public fora . She unites people across racial and ethnic lines, which is so important in New Jersey, and her creativity and sharp thinking makes all of us more effective. These are qualities we need in an Attorney General.

We all want to see vigorous enforcement of the highest ethical standards. Clearly, whenever we deter corruption and waste, another child can receive preschool or some one in need can get access to mental health care with the money we save. One of Zulima's strongest attributes is her well documented impeccable ethical standards. When I see the commentary about the need for prosecutorial experience, I will take ethical performance stretched over a legal career of thirty years as my highest criterion for success of an Attorney General every time. Quite frankly, we cannot raise the bar when some one does not conform to the "old boys club" lawyer image.

Finally, a just society is judged by how it treats the least powerful among us. We in the Hispanic community see every day the injustices that affect our

immigrant population, especially the undocumented. I personally can give witness to:

- a child dying because a mother without health insurance and the ability to communicate hesitated in rushing her child who accidentally ingested a poison to the emergency room;
- a mother killed on Route 9 walking home from work because she could not get her license to drive;
- a day laborer who worked for a week cleaning a toxic dump site without protective gear not paid by his employer.

These are complex issues that while our federal government dawdles about fixing our broken immigration policy, we need to treat these immigrants with compassion and a sense of justice. No one is better prepared to deal with these complexities than Zulima Farber.

Zulima is tough and will fight to see that all people get the full protection of the law. We need her as Attorney General!

Daniel Santo Pietro  
Executive Director