

Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
Issue #206, May-June 2011

Many Problems? Let's Work Together!

Recovery from the earthquake that hit Port au Prince has been slowed in part by the lack of coordination among various aid organizations operating there. Could it be that improvements in the quality of life in the Langley Park area have been slowed for the same reason? We may find out. And here, we assume that the area will not be bulldozed (as called for in the PG Sector Plan), at least not in the coming decade.

There are many non-profit organizations and public sector agencies operating in the working class immigrant area that stretches from the eastern end of Langley Park to the area just west of Piney Branch Road, including slices of East Silver Spring, north Takoma Park, and north Carole Highlands. The area is partly in Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and the City of Takoma Park.

The relevant organizations/agencies working in the area include Casa de Maryland, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Action Langley Park, Impact Silver Spring, Centronia, Catholic Charities, the two counties' school systems, social service agencies and police departments, and many more.

At a recent meeting of many organizations and agencies — masterfully chaired by Chuck Short—the representatives appeared to be determined to create a working coalition so that there would be the benefits of synergy. Of course, such a coalition cannot be created overnight if harmony and productivity are to be the end result. But efforts have begun.

All of the involved organizations and agencies work in an area often referred to as "Maryland's International Corridor" (other names have been proposed, e.g., International Crossroads. One suggestion for the evolving "consortium" is MOSAIC (Maryland Organizations Supporting and Assisting the International Crossroads).

Whatever the name, the goal is an improved quality of life in the area. That will probably lead, over time, to foci on education, housing, health care, safety, transportation, and more. That is, to address "the social economic, educational, and political challenges [and opportunities] in the area." (From a meeting document.) Let's hope! ■

→For information about another new collaboration, see page 7, below.

Education

"In the current climate of fiscal retrenchment, it is urgent that policy discussions about immigrant youth use the language of investments rather than expenditures. Just like Wall Street. The language of investments, of compounded interest, of higher dividends, by investing today for tomorrow's future." (Marta Tienda speaking at the Brookings Institution, 20 April 2011) See BLP page 2 for more on education.

Secure Communities

1. It "Destroys Public Trust"

This is the title of an article written by San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey and published in the San Francisco Chronicle (1 May 2011). Below are some of the article's highlights. The full article is available online at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/05/01/INB81J8OCL.DTL>. What Sheriff Hennessey describes is clearly similar to what exists in suburban Maryland. That is why participating in Secure Communities appears to be counterproductive if the goal really is secure communities.

As the sheriff of San Francisco for more than 30 years, I know that maintaining public safety requires earning community trust. We rely heavily on the trust and cooperation of all community members—including immigrants—to come forward and report crimes, either as victims or as witnesses. Otherwise, crimes go unreported. and this affects everyone—citizens and noncitizens alike. It also leads to "street justice," in which residents who are too afraid to go to the police decide to take justice into their own hands, often with deadly result....

Immigration and Customs Enforcement's controversial Secure Communities program violates this hard-earned trust with immigrant residents. Under this program, the fingerprints of everyone booked into a county jail are conveyed electronically to ICE, which checks them against its own database to see if deportation should be considered. This applies to even a minor matter, such as having no driver's license in one's possession in a traffic stop.

This is not an exaggeration or a hypothetical: It happened here in San Francisco just a few months ago to a man with no criminal record whatsoever who was placed in federal detention and since has been deported.

The use of fingerprints to initiate immigration scrutiny is of particular concern to victims of domestic violence. In a recent case in San Francisco, a woman called 911 to report domestic violence, but the police arrested both her and her partner. Although no charges were ever filed against the woman, she is now fighting deportation. There should be no penalty for a victim of a crime to call the police. All it takes is a fingerprint.

It does not matter if the person is innocent because the fingerprints are transmitted to ICE at arrest, prior to criminal court proceedings. ICE's own data show that 29% of people deported because of Secure Communities are classified as non-criminals. [The Prince George's County figure is much higher.] The result is often that a child is taken from a parent, or an individual raised since childhood in the United States is deported to the country where he was born but where he has no family and doesn't even speak the language.

This fear of the arbitrary use of immigration laws is only reinforced when you have a high-ranking ICE official telling



Winning the Future

Immigrant Children in the New America

1. Latino/a Education

In April of this year, the Department of Education issued the "Winning the Future" document. The subtitle is "Improving Education for the Latino Community." Its focus is clearly on improving the education of Latino/as. Below are a few of the paragraphs. Segments are below. The full report is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/WinningTheFutureImprovingLatinoEducation.pdf.

In his State of the Union, the President made it clear that the most important contest this country faces today is not between Democrats and Republicans, but with competitors around the world for the jobs and industries of our time. To win that contest and secure prosperity for all Americans, we must out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world. The Latino community is integral to that plan to win the future.



There are 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States, composing 16% of the total population and a

significant portion of the labor force. When you add the nearly 4 million residents of Puerto Rico, the total number of Latinos surpasses 54 million. Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population increased by 15.2 million, accounting for more than half of the 27.3 million increase in the total population of the United States. In the coming decades, Latinos will continue to drive the growth of the labor force, as they will account for 60% of the nation's population growth between 2005 and 2050. In this way, Latino success in education and in the labor market is of both immediate and long-term importance to America's economy.

Latinos are a young population. There are 17.1 million Latinos ages 17 and younger in the U.S., more than 23% of this age group. In today's American public education system, Latinos are by far the largest minority group, numbering more than 12.4 million in the country's elementary, middle and high schools. Currently, nearly 22%, or slightly more than 1 in 5, of all pre-K-12 students enrolled in America's public schools is Latino.

Yet, Latino students face persistent obstacles to educational attainment. Less than half of Latino children are enrolled in any early learning program. Only about half of all Latino students earn their high school diploma on time; those who do complete high school are only half as likely as their peers to be prepared for college. Just 13% of Latinos have a bachelor's degree, and only 4% have completed graduate or professional degree programs....

Currently, 1 in 5 students in the public schools system is Latino. Yet almost half of Hispanic students never receive their high school diplomas. These dropout rates have limited the advancement opportunities of a population that is estimated to become the majority of the Nation's labor force in less than 50 years. And Latino students often have less opportunity than their peers to take the challenging curricula – including advance courses in mathematics, and Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses—that are often indicative of college success.

2. Early Care and Education

Karoly and Gonzalez, in *Future Child* (Spring 2011, pp. 71-101) think that there are ways to reduce or perhaps eliminate

"Education" continued top of next column

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the educational accomplishment gap between native and immigrant children. Below is an overview of their recent Rand report.

Immigrant children, now a substantial and growing share of the population, are more likely than children with native-born parents to face a variety of circumstances, such as low family income, low parental education, and language barriers that place them at risk of developmental delay and poor academic performance once they enter school.

What is the current role of and future potential for early care and education (ECE) programs in promoting healthy development for immigrant children? Participation in center-based care and preschool programs has been shown to have substantial short-term benefits and may also lead to long-term gains as children go through school and enter adulthood. Yet, overall, immigrant children have lower rates of participation in non-parental care of any type, including center-based ECE programs, than their native counterparts.

Much of the participation gap can be explained by just a few economic and socio-demographic factors. To some extent, the factors that affect disadvantaged immigrant children resemble those of their similarly disadvantaged native counterparts.

Affordability, availability, and access to ECE programs are structural barriers for many immigrant families, as they are for disadvantaged families more generally. Language barriers, bureaucratic complexity, and distrust of government programs, especially among undocumented immigrants, are unique challenges that may prevent some immigrant families from taking advantage of ECE programs, even when their children might qualify for subsidies. Cultural preferences for parental care at home can also be a barrier.

Policy makers can follow a two-pronged approach for improving ECE participation rates among immigrant children.

◆First, federal and state ECE programs that target disadvantaged children in general are likely to benefit disadvantaged immigrant children as well. Making preschool attendance universal is one way to benefit all immigrant children.

◆Second, participation gaps that stem from the unique obstacles facing immigrants, such as language barriers and informational gaps, can be addressed through the way publicly subsidized and private or nonprofit programs are structured.



3. What's Happening and Should Happen

The USA should, according to the above articles and much additional research, give the highest priority to education, and especially the education of the less-well-off. That means good teachers and principals, a strong parent-school link, effective parent liaisons, and more. But locally and for the most part nationally, states and local jurisdictions are not acting in accord with the recommendations.

Of course, young people and their schools are embedded within the larger socioeconomic system. A youth's socioeconomic background is more significant in determining his or her learning than school-based factors such as a teacher's credentials. And the rich-poor gap in the USA has constantly been increasing. We're not Tunisia yet, although maybe we should worry.

But schools can make a difference if we care. Everyone should be up in arms because the future of Prince George's County and Maryland and the USA depend on a heavy investment in our children, native and immigrant. Yet we're not doing what's needed. What are we waiting for? ■

What's Happening

Seat Belts!



Every young child traveling in an automobile or truck should be in a car safety seat designed for a child's safety. Every child! It's for safety, of course, but also note that if a police officer stops a car in which there is a child not in a car seat, the fine is \$50 (for each child). But some families are lazy about that, and others cannot afford a proper seat belt. What to do? In the Langley Park area, a family member should contact the Adelphi/Langley Park Family Support Center at 301 431-6210. The Center has a program for

renting safety seats at a low cost for those who cannot afford to purchase one.

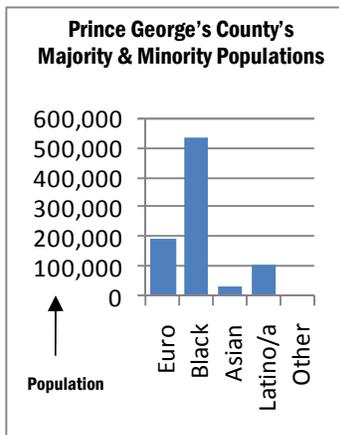
Good Eyesight! (and good information)

On the second Wednesday of every month from 4 to 7 p.m., there is an eye clinic at the Pine Ridge Community Center (8615 Piney Branch Road). An eye exam is free, and eye glasses are sold at a very low price. For information, call 301 445-3139. The Community Center is just a block north (towards University Blvd.) of the TESS Center. Don't know the TESS Center? It has lots of information about how to deal with problems and opportunities. Location: 8513 Piney Branch Road.

Who's a Minority in PG?

Some members of the County Council are asking the county's purchasing office to direct contracts to minority-owned businesses. One councilman complained about the current situation, "That's a pretty bad image for a county with a minority population that's nearly 70%."

The situation raises interesting questions: Should contracts be awarded on the basis of race or ethnicity? What unit of analysis should be used to determine who is a minority group member; after all, in the county, the minorities are Euros, Latinos, and Asians. What about the 55,000 residents of immediate African heritage: Are they a minority? Thus can a majority be a minority, and vice versa?



Cleaning Up

The Accountability, Compliance and Integrity Task Force has proposed that PG county officials help the county to "shed its reputation for government corruption" by "urging county officials to create an independent government watchdog, set up a hotline for tips, strengthen the county's ethics board and augment protections for whistleblowers who find abuses in government." (*Washington Post*, 24 April 2011) Clearly, an agency with power is needed to make sure that develop, in Langley Park or wherever, does not lead to speculation of skullduggery.

Illegally Hiring

As reported here and elsewhere, the Prince George's County school system hired a thousand-plus Philippine teachers ... illegally. That is, they did not follow the Federal regula-

tions about repaying the teachers' costs. So the county owes the teachers millions of dollars, and there are also federal penalties for non-compliance. The system doesn't have much spare money, and it also needs these qualified teachers if classes during the coming year(s) are to be taught well with a reasonable number of students in a class. This county failure is not a do-as-I-do lesson to be learned by students in the school system. Let's hope it's sorted out so that neither the teachers nor the students are hurt.



Hospital Trouble

In a *Gazette* article by Daniel Valentine (5 May 2011), there's a portrait of the struggles of several local hospitals within the Dimensions Healthcare umbrella. Here are a few quotes:

"Citing continued cash-flow problems and failure by lawmakers to create a long-term solution for the troubled Prince George's County hospital system, a Wall Street bond company has given Dimensions Healthcare a low grade [the next to bottom CC rating] for the sixth consecutive year. ... Yet almost 200,000 patients are treated by Prince George's Hospital Center in Cheverly, Laurel Regional Hospital, and the Bowie Health Campus. ... Currently, Prince George's County and the state each pay \$15 million per year to Dimensions—just enough to keep the hospitals open."



The high number of uninsured poor who go to these hospital appears to be the immediate problem. Of course, the larger problem is that the USA doesn't have a health system that provides reasonable service at an affordable cost. It is amazing that so many countries around the world provide free or low-cost health services to all—but we don't. Of course, some people (not our friends!) implicitly argue that people who are not able to get enough income for health care don't deserve health care. Agh!

Schools: Don't Ask About Immigration Status

On May 6, Federal officials issued a memorandum to the country's school districts stating that it was illegal for an official to ask about a child's immigration status—or even to ask for information that might provide a clue as to the child's status. The memorandum, signed by our own Tom Perez, stated: "The undocumented or noncitizen status of a student (or his or her parent or guardian) is irrelevant to that student's entitlement to an elementary and secondary public school education." Alas, there are still some school districts that ask about immigration status. Will the Feds clamp down?

The proof requirement reminds us of a wonderful segment of the film, *La Ciudad*. In it, a father tries to register his daughter in a school, but the school administrator insists on having proof of residence. Alas, the poor father and his daughter live in a truck parked on a land fill. No rent receipts. So the daughter was turned away.

Deportation of Criminals: A Problem

Recent press reports indicate that Martin Estrada Luna, who was deported several years ago from the U.S. to Mexico for the third time because of a rap sheet of petty crimes like burglary, became a vicious criminal in Mexico. Authorities in Mexico say that he transformed himself into a drug baron known as "El Kilo," leader of a vicious cell of the Zetas gang. And it was he who masterminded the mass killings of more than 250 people. He is now under arrest in Mexico; let us hope he doesn't escape. But this is an example of the USA sending criminals—and crime—to an immigrant's heritage country with

law enforcement, "If you don't have enough evidence to charge someone criminally but you think he's illegal, we can make him disappear." This is a quote from James Pendergraph, the former executive director of the ICE Office of State and Local Coordination, who was speaking in 2008 to the Police Foundation's national conference on immigration issues.

2. States Are Resisting

The *New York Times* (6 May 2011) reports that the *Secure Communities* program is losing some support in some states and local jurisdictions. The article source: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/06/us/06immigration.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Secure%20Communities&st=cse.

Governor Pat Quinn of Illinois said he was pulling his state out of the program, known as *Secure Communities*, the first time a state has sought to withdraw entirely. In California, where the program is already under way throughout the state, the Legislature is considering a bill that would allow counties or police agencies to choose whether to participate.



In Massachusetts, Governor Deval Patrick has held a series of heavily attended and sometimes raucous meetings on the program in an effort to vent criticism and build support for the administration's approach. In Maryland, Montgomery County considered withdrawing, then concluded reluctantly that it had to take part. ...

State officials and federal lawmakers have questioned the program, saying that Homeland Security officials conveyed misleading information about whether participation was mandatory or whether states could opt out. Some state officials, led by Governor Quinn, said the program was not accomplishing its stated goal of deporting convicted criminals, but had swept up many immigrants who were here illegally but had not been convicted of any crime.

Governor Quinn, in a letter to ICE, the agency that runs the *Secure Communities* program, said the Illinois State Police were withdrawing because the program had not met the terms of a 2009 agreement with the state. Under that memorandum, the program's purpose was to identify and deport immigrants "who have been convicted of serious criminal offenses."

Statistics from the immigration agency showed that nearly one-third of immigrants deported from Illinois under the program had no criminal convictions. It is a civil violation for an immigrant to be in the United States illegally; it is not a crime.

"Illinois signed up to help I.C.E. remove criminals convicted of serious crimes, but based on the statistics from I.C.E., that's not what was happening," said Brie Callahan, the governor's spokeswoman.

3. ICE Says "You Can't"

From the *Huffington Post* (6 May 2011): "The Department of Homeland Security will not allow Illinois law enforcement to stop sharing information with immigration enforcement, despite Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn's request to opt-out of [*Secure Communities*] ... DHS officials ... will still require the state to share fingerprints with immigration enforcement—even though Quinn said he wants to terminate a memorandum of understanding with the agency to share the data." So the formerly "optional" program is becoming a mandated program—even though the program is harmful to law enforcement efforts, even though non-criminals are deported in this "anti-crime" program. ■

disastrous effects. Of course, we do this to El Salvador, Guatemala, and other countries. A policy change is needed, but what? How can we protect ourselves yet not turn the country of the deported into killing fields?

Baker About His Job

County Executive Baker was recently interviewed by the *Hyattsville Patch*. Here are a few of his comments: "It's a lot different than I expected it to be. ... It's one thing to give your opinion ... and another to execute [the laws]. ... The decisions come very fast. ... But [this job] is a rewarding one."



Source: <http://hyattsville.patch.com/articles/video-series-county-exec-baker-talks-about-his-transition-into-office#video-5946554>

The U.K. Virginity Tests!

The USA has often not treated immigrants well. But new research by two Flinders University researchers reveals that perhaps one hundred women coming from India to the U.K. in the 1970s were forced to take "virginity tests." The test apparently is no longer used, and this newsletter doesn't know the test details. But it does remind one of some Ellis Island practices. The docudrama *Golden Door* portrays some very ugly behavior by our officials a century ago.

Food Trucks

For several years now, the Langley Park area—and indeed the entire county—has been deprived of the rich, varied, and affordable food provided by food trucks. Thanks to county officials' actions, two scores of small businesspeople have been forced out of business, and residents have been deprived of good heritage food as well as centerplaces for socializing. Many national and local newspapers have carried articles about the wonderful food available from the food trucks. For instance, the *New York Times* (8 April 2011) has written favorably about Hop Phan's truck "Dos Chinos" that works in Orange County, California. The truck serves fusion dishes such as coconut curry chicken with sour cream. And in Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, one can have good dim sum! (The photo is of the side of the truck.) That truck's website is <http://www.dimanddensum.com>. The residents of Prince George's County are losing out on some exciting and affordable cuisine as well as some mainstream pupusas! Let's hope county decisionmakers change their minds.



How's Your BMI?

The meaning of BMI is body mass index. It should be checked periodically, and if it's in the "overweight" or "obese" categories, take corrective action. To check, go to <http://www.livehealthclub.com/calc/bmi.php>. ■

STUCK IN VENTILATION DUCT!

A Try for a Free Meal

The PG Fire Department reports that on May 5 a 30ish male was rescued by firefighters after being trapped in a Jerry's Subs and Pizza ventilation duct for up to 8 hours. Technicians cut away a portion of the cooking ventilation hood which released the victim from his position. There were 25 firefighters and medics who worked for 40 minutes to complete the extrication. Well, it's a change of pace!

COMPLETE SECONDARY SCHOOL!

And Then?

The current recession (or current post-recession) has heightened a decades-long trend of the decline of the jobs and earning power of the American middle class, replaced in part by an increase in lower-level jobs. Once upon a time, a college degree guaranteed entry into the middle class, but clearly that is not the case now. Consider the data in the table (to the right).

Occupation	Percent with BA/BS	Number
Waiter/Waitress	13.4	317,759
Flight Attendants	29.8	29,645
Laborers	5.07	118,441
Janitors	5.01	107,457
Truck Drivers	5.09	85,205
Bartenders	16	80,542
Food Preparation	7.24	63,737
Telemarketers	15.85	54,713
Postmen/women	13.95	49,452
Parking Lot Attendants	13.74	18,749

Of course, most college graduates enter college-demanding jobs, but clearly not all college graduates are so fortunate. More than 300,000 graduates are working as waiters or waitresses! More than 100,000 are working as janitors! About 50,000 are delivering our mail!

These data raise the question: Should we be embarking on an effort, as articulated by President Obama and most of the rest of us, that every young person should go to college? But if not college, then what? Perhaps technical training is a better route to adult comfort than four or more years working towards a college degree. In Baltimore, the average salary of a full-time



massage therapist is \$45,117. For a first-level plumber in Rockville, the average salary is \$43,643. The average salary of a flight attendant working out of Richmond, Virginia, is \$54,327. Not bad, and to get these jobs, one does not have to go to college—just take the requisite massage therapy training, flight training, or become a plumber's apprentice.

Of course, there are many jobs that require (and perhaps should require) a college education, for instance, elementary school teacher, nurse, accountant, orthopedist. And if that's what a secondary school student wants to be, s/he should go to college. But if flight attendant, etc., seem equally appealing, why not start building one's bank account by start flight attendant training? (And see the world!)



But maybe going to college is not only to get a job. For many years, people have argued for the traditional liberal arts education that may not provide one with the skills needed to be a plumber but prepares the young person with better preparation for life. Read some great books, learn to appreciate music, find out how governments work and ways they might improve, perhaps learn a foreign language and even visit a place where it is the prevailing language.

"Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings." (Association of American Colleges and Universities, http://www.aacu.org/leap/what_is_liberal_education.cfm) That's convincing. So to main-

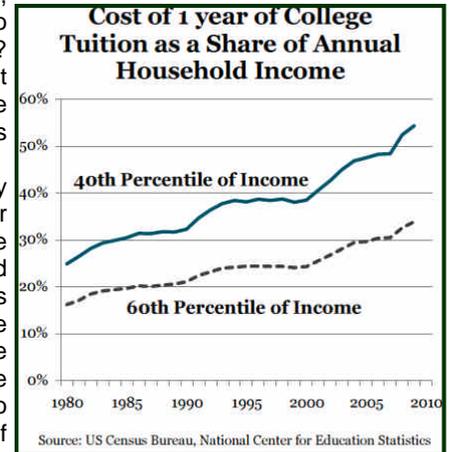
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tain America's democracy and civility, going to college clearly helps—unless higher education becomes a trade school.

Okay, going to college may be good for the individual and our country, but if so, then why is going to college so expensive? Why does it shut out many people in the lower-middle-class and below?

There are many sources of funding for young people whose family cannot afford college. Well, that's the belief. But the ALP staff knows quite a few young people who have not gone to college because of the high cost, or who have started college but dropped out because the expenditure could not be sustained. Does that mean back to massage therapy or plumbing? Maybe so, and clearly it is possible to earn a reasonable living in these jobs. And the stigma that some jobs carry may be disappearing as more and more college grads don't enter college-traditional jobs. The ALP staff knows a man with a college degree who works pick-up jobs for \$25 an hour, and he made enough during 2010 to fly to Haiti to help as a volunteer to build some houses.

The editor of this publication entered college because his middle-class mother said that is what one does after receiving the secondary school diploma. Maybe that should be less routine these days. Of course, we could convert places such as the University of Maryland College Park and Johns Hopkins University into trade schools. (Some people claim they are already!) But that would be a stupid transformation; if those major universities offering a range of education including liberal arts were not to exist, the quality of our American lives would be much deprived. ■



COUNTY POLICE: THEN & NOW

We should be very glad that the county's police officers have been led, in recent years, by men who care about the area's residents and are quick to address mistakes: Roberto Hylton (retired), Mark Magaw (pictured; he is now Acting Chief), and Kevin Davis (now Deputy Chief). It was not always so. Here is a small portion of a *Washington Post* article (26 April 2011) about some very serious mistakes made years ago involving a man by the name of Keith Longtin.



"Maryland's highest court on Monday rejected Prince George's County's request to throw out a civil judgment of \$5 million for a man who was jailed for more than eight months after he was wrongly charged with killing his wife—a decision that will cost the county at least another \$2.5 million. ...

"County homicide detectives interrogated Longtin for more than 28 hours without sleep and ignored his requests for a lawyer. Detectives said Longtin confessed, but Longtin denied that. ...

"In January 2000, DNA results cleared Longtin, but police did not notify prosecutors. Charges against Longtin were dropped five months later."

Twenty-eight hours without sleep, no access to a lawyer, no notification of prosecutors when the DNA tests were available. Wow! Let's hope those sloppy days are long gone.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND DETENTION

The USA Has Some Fixing To Do

In December 2010, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued a report on the human rights of immigrants detained in the United States by ICE and other agencies. The report, which has just come to the attention of BLP, is quite critical. The report covers the time period up until mid-2009. Since then, the Obama administration has announced some corrective steps. Their implementation is apparently in doubt. Below are four paragraphs from the 155-page report. The full report, entitled *Report on Immigration in the United States: Detention and Due Process*. It is online at <http://cidh.org/pdf%20files/ReportOnImmigrationInTheUnited%20States-DetentionAndDueProcess.pdf>.

One of the IACHR's main concerns is the increasing use of detention based on a presumption of its necessity, when in fact detention should be the exception. The United States Supreme Court itself has upheld the constitutionality of mandatory detention in immigration cases that have not been decided, even though the violations being alleged are civil in nature and despite the loss of liberty that that detention presupposes.

The Inter-American Commission is convinced that in many if not the majority of cases, detention is a disproportionate measure and the alternatives to detention programs would be a more balanced means of serving the State's legitimate interests in ensuring compliance with immigration laws.



The IACHR is disturbed by the rapid increase in the number of partnerships with local and state law enforcement for purposes of enforcing civil immigration laws. The Inter-American Commission finds that ICE has failed to develop an oversight and accountability system to ensure that these local partners do not enforce immigration law in a discriminatory manner by resorting to racial profiling and that their practices do not use the supposed investigation of crimes as a pretext to prosecute and detain undocumented migrants.

For those cases in which detention is strictly necessary, the IACHR is troubled by the lack of a genuinely civil detention system, where the general conditions are commensurate with human dignity and humane treatment, and featuring those special conditions called for in cases of non-punitive detention. The Inter-American Commission is also disturbed by the fact that the management and personal care of immigration detainees is frequently outsourced to private contractors, yet insufficient information is available concerning the mechanisms in place to supervise the private contractors.

The IACHR is also disturbed by the impact that detention has on due process, mainly with respect to the right of an attorney which, in turn, affects one's right to seek release.

To better guarantee the right to legal representation and, ultimately, to due process, stronger programs offering alternatives to detention are needed and the Legal Orientation Program must be expanded nationwide. The Inter-American Commission is particularly troubled by the lack of legal representation provided or facilitated ex officio by the State for cases of unaccompanied children, immigrants with mental disabilities and other persons unable to represent themselves.

THERE'S A SHORTAGE IN AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS BUT PG COUNTY WANTS TO BULLDOZE THEM

Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies has just released a report* that clearly describes the need for more affordable housing—not less. It begins: "The troubled homeowner market, along with demographic shifts, has highlighted the vital role that the rental sector plays in providing affordable homes on flexible terms. But while rental housing is the home of choice for a diverse cross-section of Americans, it is also the home of necessity for millions of low-income households." Necessity! And our government officials must respond to this necessity in a location that makes commuting to work easy.

The report continues: "And the share of US households unable to find affordable rentals has been on the rise for a half-century, with a large jump in the last decade as renter income fell even further behind housing and utility cost increases. Even as the need for affordable housing grows—both assisted by the government and supplied in the private market—long-run pressures continue to threaten this essential resource.

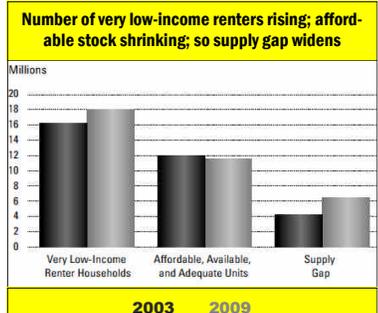
"Rental markets are now tightening, with vacancy rates falling and rents climbing. With little new supply of multifamily units in the pipeline, rents could rise sharply as demand increases. Regardless, affordability is likely to deteriorate further over the next few years as persistently high unemployment limits renter income gains. Meanwhile, policymakers must find ways to do more with less as they confront the stark realities of federal budget cuts. In this difficult environment, all levels of government will be challenged to support efforts to meet the nation's fundamental need for affordable, good-quality rental housing.

"A common standard of affordability is that rent and utility costs together require less than 30% of household income. Above that limit, renter cost burdens are defined as moderate (30-50% of income) or severe (more than 50% of income). In 1960, 24% of renters were at least moderately burdened, including 12% that were severely burdened. By 2000, these shares had reached 38% and 20%. And by 2009, the share of at least moderately cost-burdened renters soared to 49%; the share of severely burdened renters jumped to 26%."

It's fairly certain that most of the families renting in the Langley Park area now pay more than 30% of earnings for rent, and probably a third of the renters pay 50% of earnings. It is a crisis. Thank goodness for somewhat affordable rents in the Langley Park area. But even these may not be available in a few years thanks to the gentrify-and-displace program articulated in the Sector Plan. Are there people who think: "Hey, who cares about working class and poor Spanish-speaking immigrants. If they have to live in the USA, let 'em go to Montgomery County or preferably further away." No one (except in a way Wayne Curry some years ago) has said that, but we do know that actions speak louder than words.

Maybe there's a dream behind the Sector Plan. Maybe it's a dream that the big mansion occupied by that organization protecting immigrants from injustice will be converted into an up-scale bed and breakfast—surrounded by newly-built middle- and upper-middle-class condos. So the parents and children can visit without crowding the condo; and they will be walking distance from their relatives.

*The Harvard study is available at http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh11_americas_rental_housing/AmericasRentalHousing-2011-bw.pdf ■



The Mental Health Of Young Latinos and Latinas

The subject of a new effort that is part of "Puentes: Bridging Youth to Healthy Behavior," the Maryland Multicultural Youth Center and other organizations in an emerging consortium will focus on the mental health of young Latino/as.

At a meeting in Langley Park on May 10, there was widespread agreement that the needs are great. The organizations



are addressing several questions: What is being done to meet the needs of those whose mental health is not good? What is being done to prevent the problems? What can be done to fill the resource gap—especially with a lack of funding. Indeed, Prince George's County funds for mental health have been cut despite the increasing problem. Ah, funding.

Luisa Montero [photo to right] was the MC of the May event, and she was joined at the speakers' table by Senator Victor Ramirez, Councilman Will Campos, Peggy Higgins, Stephany Price-Martinez, Marco Aguilar, and Judith Freidenberg.

Space is too limited to summarize all of the good points made by the speakers and members of the audience. However, we should note that Councilman Will Campos forcefully indicated that advocacy makes a difference, and therefore at budget and other hearings, those seeking more county support for mental health should be seen and heard. Out of sight, out of mind.

Peggy Higgins directs community resources in College Park and serves on the County's School Board. She talked about many needy mental health cases that remain on a queue because the resources for treatment are far from sufficient. Every one of the cases should be in the hands of mental health professionals now, but in overload that cannot be done.

Research

Here are a few research findings on Latino mental health published by the Multicultural Action Center and the National Institute of Mental Health:

- ◆MAC: Latinos are identified as a high-risk group for depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.
- ◆MAC: Prevalence of depression is higher in Latino women (46%) than Latino men (19.6%); Latino and Asian American girls exhibit more depressive symptoms than the African American or white girls.
- ◆MAC: Long-term residence in the United States significantly increased rates in mental disorders, with particularly dramatic increases in the rates of substance abuse.
- ◆MAC: There are far too few Spanish-speaking and Latino providers.
- ◆From an NIMH interview: "Being Latino made seeking help harder because there's a silence over things."
- ◆NIMH: Factors such as neighborhood stability, perceived discrimination, and the strength of family bonds all combine to influence the prevalence of mental disorders across distinctive Latino ethnic groups.
- ◆NIMH: Providers must have cultural competence. ■

OBAMA ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

In El Paso on May 10, President Obama gave a let's-improve-the-immigration-system speech. Some cynics think the speech was only to get Latinos back into his political camp. But the President probably does want something along the lines of comprehensive immigration reform. How to do that with anti-immigrants in the majority in the House of Representative is quite another question. But those who favor reform should not concede defeat now. There may be a chance for some if not all that is needed.



Here are some of the President's views: "In recent years, concerns about whether border security and enforcement were tough enough were among the greatest impediments to comprehensive reform. They are legitimate issues that needed to be addressed—and over the past two years, we have made great strides in enhancing security and enforcement.

"We have more boots on the ground working to secure our southwest border than at any time in our history. We're going after employers who knowingly break the law. And we are deporting those who are here illegally. I know the increase in deportations has been a source of controversy, but I want to emphasize that we are focusing our limited resources on violent offenders and people convicted of crimes—not families or people looking to scrape together an income.

"So we've addressed the concerns raised by those who have stood in the way of progress in the past. And now that we have, it's time to build an immigration system that meets our 21st-century economic needs and reflects our values both as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants."*

The White House also issued a policy paper on immigration: "Building a 21st Century Immigration System." Towards the end of the document is a section, "Proposals for Change," which are reproduced below:

In order to hold accountable people who are living in the United States illegally, the President supports the establishment of a legalization program that includes the following:

- ◆Requiring illegal immigrants to register and submit to rigorous security check and verification of eligibility, including submitting their fingerprints for criminal and national security background checks;
- ◆Individuals convicted of crimes or otherwise deemed to be national security threats would not be eligible to continue in the process;
- ◆Individuals will be required to pay a registration fee and a series of fines;
- ◆In order to move forward, individuals will have to learn English and basic American civics and demonstrate that they paid any back taxes;
- ◆After eight years, individuals will be allowed to become legal permanent residents, and could eventually become citizens five years after this;
- ◆Applicants currently waiting outside the country to become legal permanent residents, as is legally required, would be eligible to receive their visas before individuals in the legalization program could apply for permanent residence. That is, illegal immigrants who complete all the requirements of the legalization program will have to go to the back of the line.

Something is probably better than nothing, but even the above "something" is not likely to be passed by the current Congress. Of course, the proposal raises lots of questions. For instance, is a "crime" operationalized in the same way that it is in the Secure Communities proposal? If a person has earned money in the informal sector and not paid taxes on those earnings, how can s/he meet the taxes requirement? Et cetera.

*The full speech is available on video at <http://my.barackobama.com/Immigration-Reform>. The policy paper is at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/immigration_blueprint.pdf ■

Health

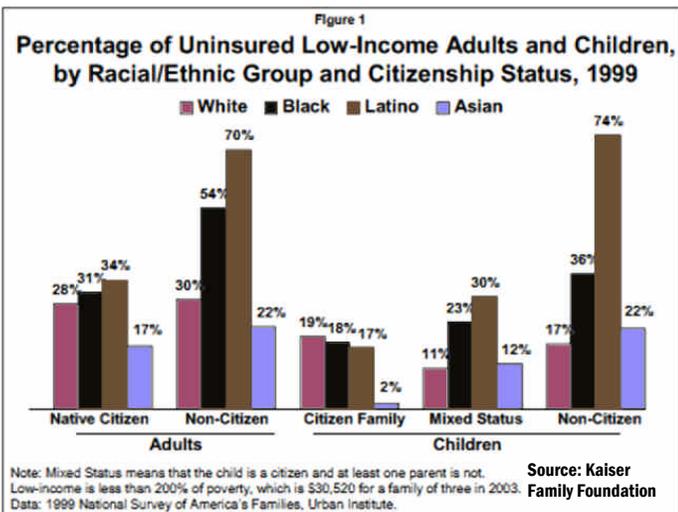
Washington Adventist

A number of nonprofit organizations, including CASA de Maryland, IMPACT Silver Spring, Mary's Center, and Community Clinic Inc., with state and local leaders, announced their support of Washington Adventist Hospital's plan to relocate to White Oak and continue to use its Takoma Park campus as a Village of Education, Health and Well-being.

"Everyone in our region should have access to the highest quality health care available," said Gustavo Torres, CASA's executive director. "The relocated hospital campus in White Oak will have all private rooms, updated facilities, and improved access from public transportation via major interconnecting roads, which are an important and needed benefit for those we serve." Michael G. Summers, District 47 Delegate, said the relocation project was an extraordinary opportunity to bring about affordable, accessible health care to address health disparities in the community. "We are in tremendous support of this effort and want you all to recognize the true power in the room is the will of people to come together and work together in collaborative effort to move our county forward." But guess what: other area hospitals are trying to block the move, apparently because they don't want competition.

Insurance Matters

Having medical insurance sure helps. The better the insurance (and the less out of pocket), the better a person's health is likely to be. Being not-well-off and a non-citizen child is the



worst situation in terms of health insurance. As the above figure indicates, fully 74% of these children are not insured. (In 2011, the percentage is surely higher.) That means postponing trips to a health professional when ill-health arises, and the delays can be harmful to one's health. In the greater Langley Park area (to include most of the International Corridor), there is a good hospital, Washington Adventist, and two good clinics, Mary's Center and CCI, Only CCI is within walking distance. Clearly, a county clinic, such as the one Dr. Carreño was trying to set up in La Union, is desperately needed.

The University of Maryland's Langley Park Project has twice conducted on-the-street surveys of residents' recent histories with health professionals. The result: only about one in ten residents had seen a health professional within the preceding two years. The Kaiser Family Foundation found somewhat similar results nationally: While 67% of Euro-Americans had seen a doctor in the past year, the figure for Latino citizens was 48% and for Latino non-citizens it was 36%. Dangerous. ■

BASIC INFORMATION

ACTION LANGLEY PARK

The nonprofit 501c3 organization, Action Langley Park, is a coalition of residents, businesspeople, workers, academics, church leaders, and others. It was founded in 1998 to improve the quality of life of residents in and near Langley Park. The means include services, information-sharing, and advocacy. The organization's service/event activities focus on a Fall "Health Check" and a Spring "Langley Park Day." Meetings of the organization take place about every other month, usually on Thursday evenings at the Langley Park Community Center. All meetings are open, and participation is encouraged. For information, send an email to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

BARRIO DE LANGLEY PARK

This neighborhood planning newsletter is edited and published by Action Langley Park, with a supportive link to the Langley Park Project of the University of Maryland. (Editor, Bill Hanna) It appears irregularly, but approximately every two weeks. Submissions and suggestions are welcome at actionlangleypark@yahoo.com. Back issues of BLP will soon be available on the web.

HAPPENINGS

Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that come to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

May 14—Legal information in Spanish about child custody, divorce, and child support. It's from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Langley Park Community Center. This information is from Norberto Martinez, who is the Court Liaison for Hispanic Services.

May 18—Crossroads Farmers Market reopens from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. this Wednesday and the following Wednesdays until mid-Fall. Lots of good produce and other items at affordable prices. The address is in front of the 7676 New Hampshire Avenue building.



May 21—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution at the St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a monthly event; it takes place every third Saturday of the month, e.g., June 18, July 16. For information, call 301 434-4646.

May 22—Festival of Nations, noon to 5 p.m. at the Tucker Road Athletic Complex, 1771 Tucker Road, Fort Washington. Included: crafts, performances, games, vendors, moon bounces, et cetera.

June 17—Last day for PG County schools Let's hope that the public and private sectors provide summer activities for the school children.

June 30—Action Langley Park meets at 7 p.m. in the Langley Park Community Center. The main agenda item will be planning ALP's work for the coming year.

August 2—National Night Out Celebration, 3-5 p.m. in and around the Langley Park Community Center. Music, games, and friendly police officers.

September 18—Hispanic Festival in Lane Manor Park, noon to 6 p.m. Lots of food, music, and games. The location is Lane Manor Park, which is on the south side of University Blvd. about one-half mile west of the University of Maryland. (The September date is tentative.)

Washington Adventist Hospital at White Oak

Take a virtual tour at this web address: <http://www.washingtonadventisthospital.com/WAH/vision/white-oak-campus.aspx>. It certainly is impressive. And there will be a full-service wellness center at the hospital site in Takoma Park.