



# National Latino Peace Officers Association®

Colorado State Chapter

## Denver Police Latino Organization

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Editor- Leonard Mares

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## Latino Officers file federal complaint

“The National Latino Peace Officers Association – Colorado State Chapter - Denver Police Latino Organization” claims job bias, threatens lawsuit

March 7, 2006

Saying they are fed up with "idle talk," the NLPOA-DPLO is taking longstanding complaints against the city's top cops to federal investigators.

They held a news conference at 9 a.m. today at the City and County Building to bring attention to its cause. Members are asking the community, especially Hispanics, to join them.

The group announced today that it has filed a class-action employment discrimination complaint with the Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Denver.



### NLPOA-DPLO President

Rufino Trujillo addresses the Media March 7, 2006 in front of the Denver City and County Building

The group has vowed to follow through with a lawsuit, if its issues remain unresolved. Similar complaints have resulted in multimillion-dollar settlements in other cities.

The group alleges that Hispanic officers at the Denver Police Department are being discriminated against in recruitment, hiring, assignments, promotions, discipline and retaliation.

Members also say that the department "does not have an EEOC policy" and has failed to post legally required information about how employees can pursue discrimination complaints.

"We have been negotiating in good faith (with the city), but all we're getting is idle talk," local chapter President Rufino Trujillo said Sunday.

Among the group's allegations:

- The department makeup does not reflect that of the city. Census figures for 2004, the most recent available showed that about 32 percent of the population of Denver was Hispanic. That number is believed to be a low estimate because undocumented Mexican nationals were not counted. Hispanic officers make up 20.31 percent of the Denver Police Department.
- Hispanics have been slow to earn promotions. When they have been tapped for higher ranking positions, they are often put in non-visible desk jobs instead of being out on the streets. The group says the highest rank Hispanic women have attained is sergeant, and there's only one.
- Minority officers who file hostile work environment complaints within the department face retaliation or find their complaints ignored.





## Areas of alleged discrimination

• Recruitment • Hiring • Promotions and assignments • Discipline • Hostile work environment complaints • Unequal conditions of employment

**20.31%** Denver Police Department officers are Hispanic. This equated to about 290 Latino officers.

**32%** of the population of Denver is Hispanic, according to the census figures from 2004, the most recent available.

That number is believed to be a low estimate because undocumented Mexican nationals were not been counted. The City of Denver is at about 550,000 from the 2000 census. That was six years ago. That 32% equates to about 176,000 Latinos in the City & County of Denver. Of this amount, the Director of the Civil Service Commission is stating that only 19% are a qualified work force. That number equates to about 104,500 qualified work force but yet the Civil Service Claim that they can't get enough qualified Latinos to become Police Officers.

The NLPOA-DPLO, which has nearly 100 members locally and 30,000 nationally, has been holding meetings with the city for three years, but tensions between the group and department brass have intensified in recent months.

**"If they can't treat us right, how can they treat the community right?" Vice President Leonard Mares said.**

The complaint includes allegations by eight former and current officers, but the organization has sent a letter to colleagues, asking others to come forward by March 15.

There have been 12 other officers that have come forward with an interest to join in the complaint.

"We're expecting retaliation, and we'll file complaints on those issues," Mares said. "The way I look at it is this: You don't need to like me. I just want you to treat me fairly."

The group is working closely with Juan Espinal, EEO director for the National Latino Peace Officers Association, who was involved in a lawsuit against the New York Police Department.

Espinal helped the Denver organization gather more than 1,000 pages of documents and letters to accompany its complaint. They were hand-delivered to justice and EEOC officials.

The group's documentation includes work-force statistics and an offensive poster hung in a common area in the police department. The headline of the poster read: "Invaders trying to subvert white American culture."

"Why do they think they're allowed to do this?" Mares asked, referring to the police department culture.

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The Board of Directors thanks the members for their feedback on various issues. This is one reason for better communication beginning with this news letter.

Each of you has been assigned to a board member. They have been instructed to contact you and get your home email address in order to better communicate the workings of this organization.

As a reminder, any items received without the approval of the NLPOA/President such as surveys, questioners, and other items are not sanctioned by the NLPOA/DPLO unless specifically endorsed and signed by the President of the NLPOA/DPLO. Disregard those items.

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