

Testimony of Ralph B. Ibarra, President – DiverseAmerica Network  
Port of Seattle Commission Meeting: June 26, 2018

**RE: Washington World Fellows**

For the record, my name is Ralph Ibarra and my company is DiverseAmerica Network, my home is in Algona, Washington, and I am here in my official capacity as Treasurer and board member of the Association of Washington Generals. The Association of Washington Generals is a service organization founded in 1970 by a group of Seattle-area business leaders, in alliance with then-Lt. Governor John A. Cherberg, to recognize individuals who have performed outstanding service to Washington state, and to give them a platform from which to continue service to the state in an official capacity. The Washington Generals are linked in state statute to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, creating a close partnership between the organization and state government. As Generals, members serve as official ambassadors of trade, tourism, and goodwill for the state. More information is available at [WAGenerals.org](http://WAGenerals.org).

In 2017, Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib developed the idea for a new statewide fellowship program to give students access to study abroad and college support opportunities. Recognizing that many students in Washington state lack access to such opportunities, Lt. Governor Habib designed the Washington World Fellows program with equity at its core, connecting motivated students with the resources to help them flourish. The program is designed not only to give students an enhanced sense of global awareness through study abroad, but also to support students as they explore their postsecondary educational options. Promoting international engagement and expanding access to college opportunities are central to the Lt. Governor's office mission, and the name "Washington World Fellows" was chosen to reflect this synergy.

To implement the program, the Office of the Lt. Governor initiated partnerships with key organizations throughout the state to ensure that the program is delivered equitably and at no cost to students. Key partners include the Association of Washington Generals, the host organization for the Washington World Fellows program, Central Washington University, and the Honorary Consulate of Spain.

Furthermore, the Washington World Fellows six-week study abroad program includes:

- Two college-level academic courses: Spanish Language and Spanish Current Events & Politics;
- Full time homestay lodging;
- Field trip excursions to points of interest; and
- Post-trip college readiness support

I believe it is essential to highlight how the Port of Seattle operations is enabling this singular experience for fifteen (15) high school students who will enter the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) grade in the fall.

A. The expansiveness of the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport offers a superb start to this life-changing experience for these students coming from around the state; which includes Adams, Chelan, Clark, Cowlitz, Ferry, King, Kitsap, Snohomish, Stevens, Thurston, and Whatcom counties.

B. Port Commissioners have always demonstrated commitments to education equity and achievement, and a recent blog post by Commissioner Steinbrueck entitled "Investing in the Future of our Community's Students" underscores that fact.

C. Scholarship support was provided by Delta Airlines and Alaska Air.

In closing I extend an invitation to the Port of Seattle Commissions, Port executives and staff to greet this first group of Washington World Fellows and their families on Saturday, June 30, as they assemble at the Delta Airlines check-in counter at 2:30 pm for their departure on flight 144.