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## Hunger strike called to protest treatment of minoritieslisten 05/27/09 Seán Kinane WMNF Evening News WednesdayListen to thisentire show:

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Al Piña, chair of theFlorida Minority Community Reinvestment Coalition, plans to begin a hungerstrike against Bank of America on June 15.

photo by Seán Kinane/WMNF

Unemployment, home foreclosures and economic uncertainty are aspects of thecurrent recession that affect people from all walks of life. One Floridian isputting his life on the line to try to make a difference among the hardest hitsegments of society.

Al Piña is chair of the Florida Minority Community ReinvestmentCoalition (FMCRC). On June 15th, Piña will begin a water-only hunger strikeprotesting the lending practices of Bank of America toward minority communities.

Piña says he will continue his hunger strike until Bank of America takescertain actions, including holding a meeting between FMCRC activists and WalterMassey, chair of the Bank of America Board of Directors.

"And you will be part of that meeting. We're going to have an annual meetingwith the CEO."

Piña announced the demands following the<u>7th Annual FMCRC Florida Minority</u> <u>Community Economic DevelopmentSummit</u>in Clearwater Beach on Wednesday. The twoday summit wassponsored in part by seven banks, but Bank of America was not one of them."They're a symbol of economic segregation."

But Mike Fields, the Florida state president for Bank of America, disagreeswith Piña that the bank does not invest enough in minority communities orbusinesses.

"Well, we categorically deny that. ... We have delivered more than \$35.7billion in community development lending and investments in low-to-moderateincome communities in Florida alone."

Fields says that Piña's hunger strike to get concessions from Bank of Americais not necessary: "We don't think it's warranted."

Despite Bank of America's assertions, Al Piña plans to go ahead with hishunger strike unless all of FMCRC's requests are met. His supporters, includingGlorious Johnson, prayed for him Wednesday afternoon. Johnson is a member of theJacksonville City Council and is contemplating running for Mayor in 2010.

The co-chair of the FMCRC Bank of America Florida Boycott Planning Committeeis Sam Lopez, chair of the Florida Puerto Rican / Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Several chambers of commerce are part of the FMCRC Bank of America FloridaBoycott Planning Committee, including the Latin Chamber of Commerce of theTreasure Coast. Bobby Rodriguez is their president.

**Bank of America** 

**FMCRC** 

FMCRC Florida Minority Community Economic DevelopmentSummit

Post Conference FMCRC Press Release Coming Here Are A Few highlightPhotos of Community Organizational Leaders Speaking Out Against Bank of Americaat Press Conference:

City of Jacksonville Councilwoman GloriousJohnson



Florida Puerto Rican/Hispanic Chamber of CommercePresident Sam Lopez



US Hispanic Publishers Federation Treasurer Dr. EladioArmesto



Gateway Economic Empowerment Coalition Dorothy Hughes



Puerto Rican and Minority Chamber Presidents

