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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

**XAVIER BECERRA**  
31ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

ASSISTANT TO THE  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

May 8, 2008

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-218 Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-308 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1001 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Colleagues:

We write to reiterate our enthusiastic support for H.R. 512, the National Museum of the American Latino Commission Act. Recently, this bill was included in S. 2739, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008, that was passed by the Senate on April 10, 2008 and signed by President George W. Bush today.

We respectfully request that the appropriate funding for the commission be included as part of the FY 2009 appropriations process. The legislation authorizes \$2.1 million to carry out the activities of the Commission for the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment, and once appropriated calls upon the Department of the Interior to provide the administrative services, facilities, and funds necessary for the performance of the Commission's functions.

The museums in our nation's capital are considered home to a collection of exhibits that does its best to represent the whole of the American experience. Visitors to these museums see exhibits on our nation's miraculous technological achievements, our military sacrifices and accomplishments, and the documents establishing the most sacred tenets of our democratic traditions.

In recent years, Congress and the American people have added to the mosaic portrayed by these museums by erecting the National Museum of the American Indian and commissioning a new National Museum of African American History and Culture. We celebrate these additions, as we believe they symbolize America's ongoing effort to embrace its diversity and tell its complete story.

Still, we know that among the permanent exhibits in the museums on and around the National Mall, the story that is being told about who we are and who we are becoming as a nation remains incomplete. For the 40 million Americans who come from Hispanic or Latin American heritage, there are scarcely any portrayals of their history, artistic and scientific achievements, military and economic contributions, or culture.

By appointing an expert commission, this legislation follows in the footsteps of the African American museum, and takes the first step toward ensuring that the lessons taught by our capital city's premier institutions for the arts, sciences, and humanities include a more comprehensive representation of American Latinos' contributions to this nation. The commission would have the responsibility of examining the feasibility of a new museum and would be comprised of experts with background in art and museum administration, individuals with experience in fundraising for and development of similar cultural institutions, and experts in the life, art, culture, history of American Latinos.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views and we urge you to take action on funding this initiative subsequent to the enactment of the authorizing legislation, which again we hope and anticipate is soon forthcoming. If your staff has any questions, please contact Melody Gonzales (Rep. Becerra) at 202-225-6235 or Eddy Acevedo (Rep. Ros-Lehtinen) at 202-225-3931. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA  
Member of Congress



HEANA ROS-LEHTINEN  
Member of Congress