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April 24, 2007

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
702 Senate Hart Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Salazar:

As an Arizona State Senator and Representative for 23 years, I am writing to thank you for introducing the National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act of 2007 (S 500). I offer my strong and unqualified support of this legislation which will establish a federal commission to explore the viability of creating the "National Museum of the American Latino" in Washington, DC.

The lack of a Latino-focused institution located at the National Mall has long been of great concern to the Latino community. These museums purport to reflect the history, culture, and achievements of the people of the United States. Yet scarcely do any of the permanent exhibits in these museums represent the American Latino community's role in the history and culture of this country.

Even with the many challenges and opportunities facing the Latino community, the importance of proper representation of Latinos and their contributions in our nation's foremost cultural institution cannot be underestimated. Recent experience clearly demonstrates that the virtual invisibility of the history, contributions, and status of the Latino community to many fellow Americans is no longer tenable.

Passage of S 500 is a critical first step to remedying this unfortunate situation and creating an institution devoted to the research and study of American Latino life, art, history, and culture. Once again, I appreciate your leadership and look forward to working with you on advancing this historic effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Rios" followed by a stylized flourish.

PETE RIOS  
State Representative