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June 9, 2008

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks, Chairman
Subcommittee on Appropriations for Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiaht, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Appropriations for Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Tiaht:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), I want to offer our gratitude for your support of Senate Bill 500 that established the "Commission to Study the Potential Creation of the National Museum of the American Latino Act of 2007." We were pleased that the bill, which was included in the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (S.2739), passed the Senate on April 10, 2008, passed the House of Representatives on April 29, 2008, and was signed into law by the President on May 8, 2008.

I am now appealing to your subcommittee for a \$2.1 million appropriation for FY 2009 so that the Commission to study the potential creation of the National Museum of the American Latino can carry out its function. The Commission, which will study the impact of the potential museum and the cost of construction and maintenance, will also develop an action plan, a fundraising plan, and a recommendation on whether to proceed with construction of the museum. Commission members, selected by the President and Congress, will comprise leaders with a commitment to the Hispanic-American community and with experience in the planning and administration of similar museums.

The Latino community currently represents 14 percent of the U.S. population and is projected to reach 25 percent by the year 2050, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Many people remain unaware of the major contributions made by Hispanics to the cultural and economic vitality of the nation. A National Museum of the American Latino will help to raise awareness of the community's contributions and will provide the nation's capital with an additional venue for visitors to learn about and appreciate the cultural diversity of the United States.

HACU represents 400 colleges and universities in the United States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico that collectively enroll two-thirds of all Hispanic higher-education students in the nation. We stand ready to assist you in encouraging your colleagues on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies subcommittee on appropriations to include a \$2.1 million appropriation for FY 2009 to support the work of the Commission.

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Please call upon HACU and our membership if we can provide any information, testimony or other support to gain the funding necessary for the Commission to complete its work in a timely and thorough fashion.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Antonio R. Flores". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Antonio R. Flores
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Joe Baca, Chair, Congressional Hispanic Caucus
The Honorable Xavier Becerra, U.S. Representative
The Honorable Luis Fortuño, Chair, Congressional Hispanic Conference
HACU Board of Governors