



Janet Murguía
President and CEO

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June 5, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-131, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Wayne Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Byrd and Feinstein and Ranking Members Cochran and Allard:

On behalf of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., I urge you to fully fund the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of the National Museum of the American Latino Act at \$2.1 million in Fiscal Year 2009. This legislation was included in the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (S. 2739), which was approved by the Senate on April 10, 2008, and the House of Representatives on April 29, 2008, and was signed into law by the President on May 8, 2008.

Though American Latinos' contributions span centuries and economic sectors, many people are unaware of the role that Americans of Latino descent played, and continue to play, in the building of this great nation. Now that there are more than 45.5 million Americans of Hispanic descent in this country, there is a stronger interest in ensuring that America's national museums portray an inclusive picture of the nation and its people.

The Commission created by this act would study the impact of the potential museum and the cost of construction and maintenance. It would also develop an action plan, a fundraising plan, and a recommendation on whether to proceed with construction of the museum. The Commission, selected by the President and Congress, will comprise leaders with a commitment to the American Latino community and with experience in planning for and administering similar museums.

The importance of proper representation of Latinos and their contributions in our nation's foremost cultural institutions cannot be underestimated. Museums in our nation's capital should

reflect the history, culture, and achievements of the people of the United States, yet there is no substantive permanent Latino presence in any of the exhibits. Just as troubling is that millions of schoolchildren and families, as well as tourists from all over the world, can visit Washington, DC without ever encountering a single museum, monument, or collection that helps to educate them about this nation's largest minority.

When Americans travel to Washington, DC, they expect the museums, monuments, and national parks to reflect the complete American experience. Providing the resources necessary for the Commission to do its work would be a major step toward ensuring that every American has the opportunity to learn the full history of our nation. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Murguía". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Janet Murguía
President and CEO