



MALDEF

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

March 20, 2007

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

Dear Senator Salazar:

On behalf of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), I am writing to thank you for introducing the National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act of 2007 (S. 500). We strongly support your efforts to establish a federal commission to explore the viability of creating the "National Museum of the American Latino" in Washington, D.C.

The lack of a Latino-focused museum on the National Mall is a significant concern. Museums on the National Mall should reflect the history, culture, and achievements of all people of the United States. The importance of proper representation of Latinos and their contributions in our nation's foremost cultural institutions should not be underestimated.

Latinos and all visitors to our nation's capital should be able visit a museum that commemorates the many valuable contributions of Latinos in the United States. Currently, millions of schoolchildren and families as well as tourists from all over the world can visit Washington, D.C. without ever encountering a single museum, monument, or collection that helps to educate them about this nation's largest minority group. The virtual invisibility of Latino history, contributions, and status in our nation's cultural institutions is untenable.

Immediate passage of S. 500 is a critical first step to remedying the current lack of Latino representation on the National Mall and to creating an institution devoted to the research and study of American Latino life, art, history, and culture. We commend your leadership and look forward to working with you to advance this historic effort.

Sincerely,

John Trasviña
President and General Counsel