

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Celebrate National Women's History Month



Learn About the Contributions of American Latinas
Co-Sponsor H.R. 2134

"Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar."
(Traveler, there is no path, you make it as you walk.)

Antonio Machado (1875-1939)

March 30, 2006

Dear Colleague:

Our history books are filled with the men and women who have walked unmarked paths clearing the way for new generations to create the unthinkable. As we celebrate the closing of Women's History Month and recognize the accomplishments of women long unheralded in the past, I take this opportunity to honor a few Latina pioneers who have also taught us lessons of courage, strength and wisdom.

Ellen Ochoa was the first Latina woman in space when she embarked on a nine-day mission aboard the shuttle *Discovery* in 1993 to study the Earth's ozone layer.

Dr. Antonia Novello was the first woman and first Latina to be U.S. Surgeon General. Inspired to pursue medicine as a result of her own childhood experiences, Dr. Novello is a vocal advocate for women, children, and minorities. She is currently commissioner of the New York State Department of Health.

Carmen Contreras-Bozak was the first Latina to serve in the Women's Army Corps as an interpreter and in numerous administrative capacities during World War II.

Gabriela Mistral was the first Latina to win a Noble Prize in literature, being recognized for her poetry in 1945. She taught Spanish literature at Columbia University, Middlebury College, Vassar College, and the University of Puerto Rico.

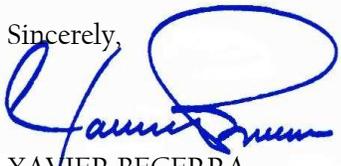
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the lead Co-Sponsor of H.R. 2134, was the first Latina ever elected to the United States Congress, and the first Latina to serve in the Florida State House.

In the spirit of honoring the leaders and pioneers who have shaped American history, I have introduced bipartisan legislation to create an expert commission to study whether and how to establish a national museum dedicated to Latino history, culture, and art. The museums in Washington, D.C. are visited by millions of tourists annually who come away with the impression that they have seen the best representation of what America has to offer. Yet scarcely any of the permanent exhibitions in the capital city are representative of the Latino experience and contributions to American life.

The House Resources Committee held a hearing in its subcommittee on National Parks on this legislation this morning and a Senate companion (Original Co-Sponsors include Senators Salazar, Martinez, Menendez, Hatch, Bingaman and Hutchison) was introduced yesterday, March 29, 2006.

Please join 106 of your colleagues (see list in the back) and co-sponsor H.R. 2134, the National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act. For further information, please contact Joel Najar at 6-3748 or joel.najar@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress

Cosponsors of H.R. 2134 as of March 30, 2006

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