



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
XAVIER BECERRA
31ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

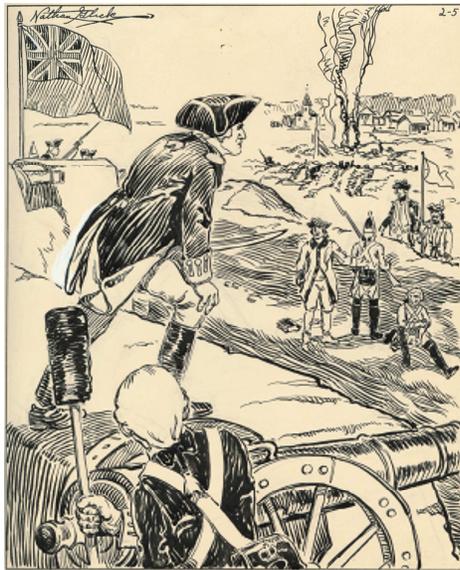
Honor Our Revolutionary Heroes, All of Them
Cosponsor H.R. 2134
Ensure that American Latinos are Part of the American Story

June 29, 2006

Dear Colleague:

On the eve of the 230th anniversary of our nation's independence, I would like to call your attention to one hero who played a crucial role in the effort to liberate the American colonies from British rule – Spanish General Bernardo de Gálvez.

Even before Spain entered the American Revolutionary



Spanish governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Gálvez, captures Fort Charlotte in Mobile from the British, Alabama, 1780. Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Nathan H. Glick pen and ink drawings.



Bernardo de Galvez, by Juan De Avalos, Foggy Bottom, Washington, DC.

War, as Governor of Louisiana, Gálvez did much to aid the American patriots. He corresponded directly with Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson and Charles Henry Lee, and responded to their pleas by securing the port of New Orleans so that only American, Spanish and French ships could move up and down the Mississippi River. Over the river, a veritable lifeline, great amounts of arms, ammunition, military supplies and money were delivered to the embattled American forces under George Washington and George Rogers Clark. Spain formally declared war against Great Britain on June 21, 1779, and King Carlos III commissioned Gálvez to raise a force of men and conduct a campaign against the British along the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coast.

General Washington's army was successful at Yorktown in part because of the success of Gálvez's army of Spaniards, Mexicans, Native Americans, free blacks and others, on the southern front against the British, driving them out of the Gulf of Mexico, and fighting them on the Mississippi and in West Florida. He was busy preparing for a campaign against the British in Jamaica when peace negotiations ended the war, and Gálvez was among the drafters of the

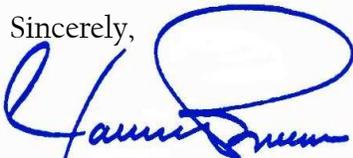
Treaty of Versailles (1783). The cities of Galveston, Texas, and St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, were both named in his honor.

Despite his important role in the story of our independence, very few Americans are aware of Gálvez. In fact, there is not a single mention of Gálvez in the Web site for the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, even though they are currently exhibiting objects that belonged to George Washington and other American soldiers during the Revolutionary War.

When Americans visit our nation's national museums, they should walk away with a better sense of who we are and who we are becoming as Americans. Yet the story told by our museums is incomplete, especially with regard to the contributions made by the 44 million Americans of Hispanic and American Latino heritage. For this reason, I encourage you to cosponsor H.R. 2134, legislation to create an expert commission to study whether and how to establish a national museum dedicated to American Latino contributions to our history, art, and culture. This bill recently was reported favorably by the House Resources Committee by unanimous consent.

To cosponsor H.R. 2134, the bipartisan National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act, and join 112 of your colleagues, please contact Joel Najjar (Rep. Becerra) at 6-3748.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress

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