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December 5, 2006

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
1119 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Becerra:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a nonpartisan coalition of major Hispanic national organizations and distinguished Hispanic leaders from across the nation, I am writing to express NHLA's strong support of the "Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino Community Act of 2005" (S.2475), which would establish and fund a federal commission to explore the viability of creating the "National Museum of the American Latino" in Washington, DC.

The lack of a Latino-focused institution located at the National Mall has long been of great concern to the Hispanic community. As you know, some of the most significant museums in our country border the National Mall between the United States Capitol and the Washington Monument. While these museums strive to reflect the history, culture, and achievements of the people of the United States, seldom do any of their permanent exhibits represent the Hispanic American community's role in the history, development, and culture of this country.

The proper representation of Latinos and their contributions in our nation's foremost cultural institution is critically important. Millions of schoolchildren and families as well as tourists from all over the world visit Washington, DC without ever encountering a single museum, monument, or collection that helps to educate them about this nation's largest minority. Even more disturbing is the fact that Latino children visiting our nation's capital have no Museum commemorating the Latino presence in this country to point to with pride.

The invisibility of the history, contributions, and status of the Latino community in our national museum system is untenable. Therefore, we strongly urge the immediate passage of S. 2475 as a first step to remedying this unfortunate situation and creating an institution devoted to the research and study of American Latino life, art, history, and culture.

Sincerely,

Ronald Blackburn-Moreno
Chair of the Board of Directors
National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

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Hispanic Federal Executives

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State Legislators

National Hispanic Corporate Council

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National Puerto Rican Coalition

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