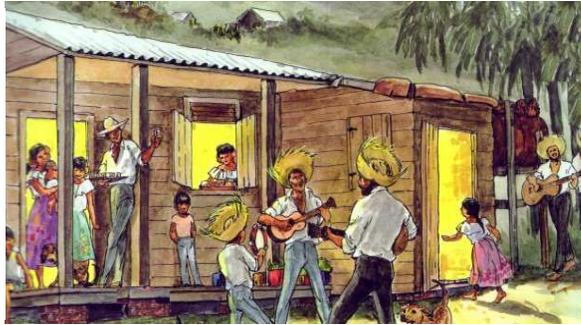


Congress of the United States
House of Representatives



CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS
DOOR-TO-DOOR IN PUERTO RICO

**Celebrate
Latino
Heritage!**



**Co-Sponsor
H.R. 2134**

Were You Invited to a *Posada* or a *Parranda* this Holiday Season?

Dear Colleague:

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through San Juan, *there was dancing and singing, coquito y lechón*... The holiday season in Puerto Rico is a time rich in traditions and festivities that last throughout December and end in mid January. These traditions reveal the interwoven nature of the cultures of Latin America and among Latinos in the United States.

In the Puerto Rican tradition of *las parrandas*, dozens of revelers may wind their way through the cobblestone streets of Old San Juan, bursting into the home of a friend around midnight with a shout of "*parranda!*" The party goes from house to house, shaking maracas, scratching out rhythms on gourds and singing *aguinaldos* (Puerto Rican Christmas carols), drinking *coquito* (a Puerto Rican eggnog) and eating traditional holiday fare like *lechón* (roasted pork).

With a cacophony of European, African, and indigenous instruments like guitars, tambourines, *maracas*, or *palitos* (sticks), *parranderos* then invite their host to join the party as it continues to *parrandear* toward the next house.

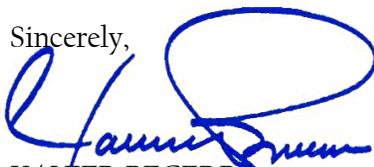
Although most *parrandas* today are secular celebrations, the practice stems from the Spanish tradition of recreating Mary and Joseph's journey through Bethlehem in search for a room at the "inn." *Parrandas* are also celebrated in other Latin American countries with Spanish and Catholic heritage, such as Venezuela. Among Mexican Americans, a similar tradition is known as *las posadas*, although these are typically more religiously oriented.

Parrandas, *aguinaldos* and *trullas navideñas*, are all part of a tradition that showcases the Latino cultural mosaic. While the music, food and dances vary from country to country, many of the common traditions prevail in Latin America and among American Latinos, who often carry on the *posada* or *parranda* tradition in the United States, adding to the wealth of diversity in American culture.

In the same spirit of sharing, celebrating, and honoring our past through celebration, I have introduced legislation to create an expert commission to study whether and how to establish a national museum dedicated to American Latino history, culture, and art. Despite a population that is over 40 million strong in the United States, Latinos share a cultural heritage that is only beginning to be understood as wholly American. Moreover, scarcely any of the exhibits in the museums in Washington commemorates the centuries of the Latino community's cultural and historical contributions to the U.S. A better representation is warranted.

To cosponsor the bipartisan H.R. 2134, the National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act, and join 102 of your colleagues (see list on back), please contact Joel Najar at 6-3748 or joel.najar@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress

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