RAZA
DEVELOPMENT
FUND
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

August 21, 2007

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

Dear Senator Salazar:

On behalf of the Raza Development Fund, Inc, we are writing to thank you for introducing the National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act of 2007 (S 500). We offer our strong and unqualified support of this legislation which will establish 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 Latino community. As you know, some of the most significant museums in our country sideline the National Mall between the United States Capitol and the Washington Monument. These museums purport to reflect the history, culture, and achievements of the people of the United States. Yet scarcely do any of the permanent exhibits in these museums represent the American Latino community's role in the history and culture of this country.

Even with the many challenges and opportunities facing the Latino community, the importance of proper representation of Latinos and their contributions in our nation's foremost cultural institution cannot be underestimated. For example, Latino children visiting our nation's capital have no place to point to with pride as commemorating the Latino presence in this country. Just as troubling is that millions of schoolchildren and families as well as tourists from all over the world can visit Washington, DC without ever encountering a single museum, monument, or collection that helps to educate them about this nation's largest minority. Recent experience clearly demonstrates that the virtual invisibility of the history, contributions, and status of the Latino community to most of their fellow Americans is no longer tenable.

Immediate passage of S 500 is a critical 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. Once again, we appreciate your leadership and look forward to working with you on advancing this historic effort.

Sincerely,

Tom Espinoza
President & CEO
Raza Development Fund, Inc.

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