

The Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act (H.R. 3459)

“Both native and foreign-born Latinos in the United States have influenced and enriched this country since our nation’s founding and continue to make significant contributions in academia, to the arts and the humanities, and in popular culture, for the benefit of all Americans. These contributions should and must be recognized on a scale that is fitting of those contributions.” – Congressman Xavier Becerra

The Latino community is a patriotic community of Americans who have served this nation since its inception and is more than 50 million strong today according to the latest [2010 Census figures](#). Despite this strength, the story of Latinos’ contributions to the U.S. has yet to be fully told in a museum in the nation’s capital.

In 2003, [Rep. Becerra introduced bipartisan legislation](#) to establish a federal commission to explore the viability of creating a “National Museum of the American Latino” in Washington, D.C. and in 2008, former President George W. Bush signed the legislation into law. President Barack Obama and congressional leaders Nancy Pelosi, John Boehner, Harry Reid and Mitch McConnell appointed the 23 bi-partisan commissioners from across the nation who, under the administration of the Department of Interior and Secretary Ken Salazar, embarked on the process of exploring the key questions around the potential creation of a museum.

On May 5, 2011, months ahead of schedule, the National Museum of the American Latino Commission submitted its [final report to Congress and President Barack Obama](#) with its findings and recommendations regarding the creation of a national museum focused on American Latino history, art and culture.

Upon the Commission’s delivery of the report, Rep. Becerra delivered the following remarks:

Moving forward with the recommendations of the May 2011 report, [Rep. Becerra introduced bipartisan legislation](#) with U.S. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Majority Leader U.S. Senator Harry Reid (D-NV), U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), and U.S. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) to authorize the Smithsonian's Arts and Industries building on the National Mall as the designated location of a future Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

In order to move forward in this effort, the House and Senate must pass the Smithsonian American Latino Act ([H.R. 3459](#) / [S. 1868](#)). Upon the bill being passed by both chambers and signed into law by the President, the Smithsonian American Latino Museum would become the 20th museum within the Smithsonian Institution, forming part of the world's largest museum and research complex.

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