



August 12, 2020

The Honorable Rick Scott
United States Senate
Room 716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Ramiro A. Cavazos
President and CEO

Dear Sen. Scott,

On behalf of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC), our Board of Directors, and Florida's Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, we are writing to urge you to take up, and pass, The National Museum of the American Latino Act (H.R. 2420) which passed the House by unanimous consent with over 290 bipartisan cosponsors on Monday, July 27, 2020. The Senate has the perfect opportunity to approve this bill during Hispanic Heritage Month this coming September. Through your support, you will be joining existing Senate colleagues including Republican Senators Rubio (FL), Cornyn (TX), Capito (WV), Portman (OH), McSally (AZ), and Tillis (NC) who have already signed on to support this historic bill.

The USHCC actively promotes the economic growth, development and interests of more than 4.7 million Hispanic-owned businesses that, combined, contribute over \$800 billion to the American economy every year. We also serve as a platform for our nationwide network of over 250 local Hispanic chambers of commerce. We are proud to have seventeen Hispanic Chambers in your home state of Florida whose work heavily impacts the economic prosperity of the minority business community in their respective areas.

Latino history is American history. As the largest ethnic group in the country with arguably the oldest ties to the founding of this nation, dating back more than 500 years, it is critical that we have an American Latino Museum on the iconic National Mall and join the many prestigious Smithsonian institutions that welcome over 20 million tourists and residents each year to present the American story. Unfortunately, by its own admission in its 1994 "Willful Neglect" report, the Smithsonian Institution has drastically underrepresented the contributions of American Latinos in its collections. Among the ten recommendations in that report, was the creation of a National American Latino Museum. In 2004, the campaign kicked off with the introduction of the National Museum of the American Latino Commission Act, which passed in 2008 and was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

Having contributed positively to every aspect of American society and impacting the areas of military, health, science, business, faith, arts, sports, politics and more, the Latino community has proudly enriched our nation's competitiveness, culture and prosperity throughout the generations. Therefore, we find it vital that we proudly share our incredible stories and celebrate a more complete telling of American history.

Here is a summary of some impressive facts that make Hispanic-Americans critical to the evolving tapestry of our country:

Essential to our History:

- Latinos have fought in every American war dating back to before the Revolutionary War, making significant contributions, including 60 Hispanic Medal of Honor recipients.
- The oldest city in our nation is St. Augustine, Florida - a Spanish settlement.



- The oldest capital city in the U.S. today is Santa Fe, New Mexico—a Spanish settlement.
- Before *Brown v Board of Education* there was *Mendez v Westminster*—this case regarding Mexican American segregation in California was the precedent for the landmark Supreme Court case.

Population Size and Growth

- At nearly 61 million people making up 18% of the U.S. population (African Americans are 12%), Latinos are the largest diverse population segment and account for over 50% of total population growth from 2008 to 2018.
- Today, one in four (25%) children under 18 is of Hispanic descent.
- Hispanics are projected to become 30% of the population by 2060.
- 65% of all Hispanics Americans are born in the United States.

Thriving Business Community

- Latinos are opening more small businesses than anyone else in the U.S.
- With a total of 4.7 million Latino-owned businesses in the U.S., one in four new businesses in the U.S. is Latino-owned.
- Over the past ten years, the number of Latino business owners grew 34%, compared to 1% for all business owners in the U.S.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact C. LeRoy Cavazos-Reyna, Vice President of Government and International Affairs via email at LCavazos@ushcc.com. Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter, we look forward to your positive response and collaboration on these important policy priorities.

Respectfully,

Carmen Castillo
Chairwoman, Board of Directors
U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Ramiro A. Cavazos
President and CEO
U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Julio Fuentes
President and CEO
Florida State Hispanic Chamber of
Commerce

Santos Arroyo
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Maria S. Antuña
Chief Executive Officer
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Palm
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Liliam M. Lopez
President and CEO
South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

CC: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Marco Rubio, Chairman, Senate Committee on Small Business and
Entrepreneurship
The Honorable Joaquin Castro, Chairman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus