



Lonnie G. Bunch III  
Secretary  
The Smithsonian Institution  
PO Box 37012  
Washington, DC 20013-7012

May 20, 2021

RE: Site Consideration for the National Museum of the American Latino

Dear Secretary Bunch:

We hope this letter finds you well. We submit this letter with the greatest admiration for the historic work you have ahead with the creation of two national museums that will not only expand, but improve the understanding of our American story for millions around the country and the world. As partners and allies of this initiative, we wanted to commend you for how quickly your team has begun the work to lay the foundation for the National American Latino Museum. With that, we also would like to underscore how important the location of this museum is for us and generations to come.

We understand that your current process includes both the review of possible locations, as well as a determination of what is defined as the area known as the National Mall. While we are excited that an initial review of locations and design has begun, it is the latter task that has us greatly concerned. After all, the definition of the National Mall is well settled for every tourist that has visited our nation's capital for years. For that reason, we ask that all recommendations submitted to the Smithsonian Board of Regents are explicitly located on the National Mall defined as the area from the Lincoln Memorial stretching past the Washington Monument to the U.S. Capitol Building.

The Mall, as envisioned by French engineer Pierre L'Enfant, was intended to be a grand avenue west of the Capitol where significant civic buildings would be located and where Americans could come to share their stories and learn about our shared history. That vision was later refined by the McMillan Plan, which proposed establishing buildings devoted to scientific purposes and great museums. As you know better than most, today the National Mall houses our most important monuments and museums; it convenes our Congress, inaugurates our Presidents, and welcomes millions of Americans and international visitors who come to our nation's capital to learn about our shared history.



From the years 2009 through 2011, the National Museum of the American Latino Commission convened nine public forums across the country to gather feedback from leaders and the general public about the creation of the museum, including its location. On the question of where to build this long-overdue museum, the answer was unanimous: the museum must be on the National Mall, even if it takes longer to build. This should come as no surprise, as the National Mall is iconic. It is where people from all corners of the country and the world come to learn about the story of America—even though that story is incomplete.

Latinos make up nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population and have been an integral part of the American story for more than 500 years. But Latinos remain one of the most underrepresented groups in the Smithsonian Institution, according to the 1994 *Willful Neglect* report. The purpose of the National Museum of the American Latino is to correct this blatant omission and illuminate the American Latino story for the benefit of all. Any location beyond what Americans recognize as the National Mall will be a disservice to—not only the Latino community—but to every American.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you in the months ahead to ensure the appropriate site is selected.

Sincerely,

Estuardo Rodriguez  
President & CEO  
Friends of the American Latino Museum

Lili Gil Valletta  
Chairwoman  
Friends of the American Latino Museum

#### **FRIENDS Board Members**

1. Antonio Argibay, Principal, Meridian Design Associates, Architects, P.C.
2. Luis R. Cancel, Commissioner, National Museum of the American Latino
3. Sergio Fernandez de Cordova, Executive Chairman, PVBLIC Foundation
4. John Leguizamo, actor, comedian, producer
5. Yvette Peña, Vice President of Multicultural Leadership, AARP
6. Jorge Plasencia, CEO, Republica Havas
7. Mario Rodríguez, Chairman, Hispanic 100
8. Cici Rojas, President, Tico Sports
9. Claudia Romo Edelman, Founder, We Are All Human
10. Luis Spinola, President and CEO, Azteca Omega Group
11. Dr. Betty Uribe, California's Consumer Bank Divisional Director, JPMorgan Chase
12. Danny Vargas, FRIENDS Chair Emeritus and President of VARCom Solutions



### **National Museum of the American Latino Commission**

1. Henry R. Muñoz III, Commission Chairman, SOMOS US Vice-Chairman
2. Moctesuma Esparza, CEO, Maya Cinemas North America, Inc.
3. Emilio Estefan, CEO, Estefan Enterprises. Inc.
4. Carlos Ezeta, Commissioner
5. Jose B. Fernandez, Dean Emeritus, University of Central Florida
6. Susan Gonzales, CEO, AlandYou
7. Aida T. Levitan, President, ArtesMiami, Inc.
8. Andres Lopez, Commissioner
9. Eduardo J. Padron, President Emeritus, Miami Dade College
10. Emma Sepulveda Pulvirenti, Commissioner
11. Cid Wilson, President & CEO, Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR)

### **National Partners & Regional Leadership**

1. Dr. Juan Andrade, President, United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
2. Mari Carmen Aponte, Former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador
3. Julissa Arce, Chairwoman, Ascend Educational Fund
4. Ana Marie Argilagos, President & CEO, Hispanics in Philanthropy
5. Rudy Arredondo, President/CEO, National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
6. Sindy Benavides, CEO, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
7. Ruben Blades, musician, actor, composer, lawyer
8. Roger Campos, Chairman, Minority Business RoundTable
9. Alejandra Campoverdi, Founder, Well Woman Coalition
10. Betty Cardenas, National Chairwoman, Republican National Hispanic Assembly
11. Ramiro A. Cavazos, President & CEO, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
12. Francela Chi de Chinchilla, Vice President of Partnerships, Equis Labs
13. Jane L. Delgado, President and CEO, National Alliance for Hispanic Health
14. Abraham Enriquez, President, Bienvenido USA
15. GinaLinn Espinoza, Founder, Get Wise Latinas & Up Latino
16. Daniel Garza, President, The Libre Initiative
17. Amy Hinojosa, President and CEO, MANA, A National Latina Organization
18. Maria Teresa Kumar, CEO and President, Voto Latino
19. Cici Rojas, President, The Latino Coalition
20. Hector V. Barreto, Chairman, The Latino Coalition Foundation
21. Benjamin Lopez, Executive Director, National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP)
22. Frankie Miranda, President and CEO, Hispanic Federation
23. Marianna Morón, Chief Operating Officer, LNEsc



24. Patricia Mota, President & CEO, Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement (HACE)
25. Janet Murguia, President and CEO, UnidosUS
26. Maria Gabriela Pacheco, Director of Advocacy, Development, and Communications, The Dream.US
27. Monica Ramirez, Justice for Migrant Women Founder & President, Latinx House Co-Founder, Poderistas Founding Principal
28. Annette Ramos, Executive Director, Rochester Latino Theatre Company
29. Elena Rios, President & CEO, National Hispanic Medical Association
30. Ivette Rodriguez, President and Founder, American Entertainment Marketing (AEM)
31. Brian de la Rosa, Business Owner, DLR Planning
32. Vanessa De La Rosa, Business Owner, DLR Planning
33. The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Former U.S. Congresswoman
34. Felix Sanchez, Chair & Co-founder, National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
35. Jennifer Sanchez, Intel
36. Raquel Tamez, CEO, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
37. Arturo Vargas CEO, NALEO Educational Fund
38. Nora Vargas, Vice Chair & Supervisor, San Diego County
39. Nikkie Whaley, Governing Board Vice President, Washington ESD, Phoenix, AZ
40. Brent Wilkes, SVP Institutional Development, Hispanic Federation

### **Community and Business Leaders**

1. Maria Agui Carter, Professor/Filmmaker, Emerson College/Iguana Films
2. Richard Aguilar, President, Aguilar Productions, Inc.
3. Brittany Alfonzo, Editorial Director, Poderistas
4. Giraldo Alvare, CEO, Monte Cristo Ent., LLC
5. Cynthia Alvarado
6. Maria Eugenia Betancourt
7. Anna Michele Bobadilla, Sr. Associate VP & Assistant Provost, UT Arlington
8. Luz Boys, Founder, My Tea Places LLC
9. Celeste Carrasco, Director of Public Affairs, AT&T
10. Yuliana Castellanos, software engineer
11. Elaine Coronado, President + Chief Strategist, Argus Events
12. Dalia Diaz, Global Quality Manager, National Hispana Leadership Institute Alumni
13. Guadalupe Garcia
14. Dr. Yolanda Garcia
15. Eileen Garcia, Vice President, Solidarity Strategies
16. Xitlalt Herrera
17. Jenn Kauffman Ortega, Chief Community Officer, The Movement Cooperative
18. Kimberly M. Lavelanet, Board Certified Behavior Analyst



19. Irene Loza
20. Monica Lozano, President and CEO (retired), ImpreMedia, LLC
21. Rebecca McPhail, Program Management Business Partner, TikTok
22. Vladimir Enrique Medenica, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Delaware
23. Alison Mendoza-Walters, Public Health Impact, LLC
24. Richard Montanez
25. Lalo Montoya, Housing Justice Organizer, Make the Road Nevada
26. Jasmine Nazarett
27. Angeles Ortega, CEO, Mi Casa Resource Center
28. Xochitl Oseguera, Vice President, MamásConPoder.org
29. Kay Cude Past
30. Elaine A. Peña, Associate Professor of American Studies, George Washington University
31. Gabriela Perez, Product Manager
32. Roland Rene Ramirez, President, RRR Group
33. Robin Ramirez Juhasz
34. Elianne Ramos, Activist
35. Kristian Ramos, Executive Director, Autonomy Strategies
36. Maria Reyes, CEO, Nexis Consulting, LLC
37. Velinda Reyes, School Board President, San Isidro ISD
38. Veronica Rivera, Legislative and General Counsel, Leonas
39. George Rosales Benavides, Genealogist and Historian
40. Rachel Stein, Chief Analyst, Equis Labs
41. Erlinda Torres, President CEO E.T. Communiques, Inc., Arte Sagrado
42. Linda Valencia Martinez
43. Quintín Vargas, QVARGAS BOOKS
44. Luis Walters, Phi Iota Alpha
45. Luichy Walters
46. Liana Walters

cc: The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States  
The Honorable Raul Ruiz, Chairman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus