

Testimony of Congressman Tony Cárdenas of California
Committee on House Administration Members Day Hearing
Thursday, November 21, 2019

I would like to start by saying thank you to Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify about one of my highest priorities in this Congress, H.R. 2420, the National Museum of the American Latino Act.

H.R. 2420 would finally create the National Museum of the American Latino. The museum will illuminate the American Latinos contributions of the story of America. It will provide for the collection, study, research, publication, and establishment of exhibitions and programs related to American Latino life, art, history, and culture. To add, the museum will provide for collaboration with Smithsonian Institution museums, research centers, other museums, and educational institutions in the United States and abroad to promote the study and appreciation of American Latino life, art, history, culture, and its impact on society here in America.

Latinos make up nearly 20 %, or 59 million of the population and are the nation's largest minority group in America. We have \$1.7 Trillion in spending power. We have been in space and have fought in every American War. We have 60 Medal of Honor recipients, won Nobel Prizes, and currently have one of the most popular musicals about one of our American Founding Fathers. We have made significant contributions in civil rights, sports, music, the arts, film and television, and are the positive force that makes America great.

The museum is important for those of Latino heritage, but also important to educate all Americans on the vast contributions Latinos continue to make, particularly at a time when racism and xenophobia are rampant. The effort of establishing an American Latino Museum is on its 25th year. In 1994, the start of this effort includes, the Smithsonian Institution's own report, *Willful Neglect*, which addressed the lack of Latino representation and penned ten recommendations to rectify this issue. In September 2018, the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative release a report on the slow progress of the Smithsonian Institution in addressing this issue and found only three of its ten recommendations from its report have been addressed. This is unacceptable. I stand on the shoulders of many whom came before and am proud to report that, today, we have the most bipartisan support for this bill with 245 cosponsors and growing in this House and 26 in the Senate.

With the tremendous amount of bipartisan support for this bill, including from most of my colleagues in this room, I ask that you move forward in marking-up this bill so that we can make history, pass it out of the House and hopefully get it to the President's desk. Thank you.