

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS,  
LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL  
INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Elizabeth S. Crowley  
Julissa Ferreras  
Peter A. Koo  
Stephen T. Levin  
Andy L. King  
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Laurie A. Cumbo  
Helen K. Rosenthal

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jose E. Serrano  
United States Congressman  
New York's 15th Congressional District

Estuardo Rodriguez, Executive Director Friends  
of the American Latino Museum

Sid Wilson, Board Chairman  
Friends of the American Latino Museum  
Commissioner Appointee to the National Museum  
of the American Latino Study Commission

Juan Cartagena, President and General Counsel  
of Latino Justice PRLDEF - Puerto Rican Legal  
Defense and Education Fund

Jorge Daniel Veneciano, Executive Director  
El Museo del Barrio in East Harlem

Dr. Marilu Galvan, Executive Director  
Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano

Dr. Marta Moreno Vega  
New York University

Milagros Baez O'Toole, President  
Elmhurst Spanish Women  
Board Chair of Acacia Network

Deborah Schwartz, President  
Brooklyn Historical Society

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[sound check]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good afternoon.

Are we ready? Okay.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good afternoon,  
everybody [gavel] and welcome to this very important  
convening of the Committee on Cultural Affairs,  
Libraries and International Intergroup Relations. I  
am very proud to be the Chair of this committee. My  
name is Jimmy Van Bramer. Joining me today is our  
amazing Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, the prime  
sponsor of the very important resolution, which we'll  
be discussing today. So I want to acknowledge  
Council Member Peter Koo of our Committee, who is  
here, and I know others will be joining us shortly.

Resolution 405 sponsored by Speaker Mark-  
Viverito calls upon Congress to pass and the  
President to sign H.R. 1217 and S. 568 to establish  
the Smithsonian American Latino Museum, and designate  
the Arts and Industries Building as its future  
location in Washington, D.C. This resolution  
supports the creation of a national museum to foster  
a deeper awareness of Latino history and heritage in  
the United States. Needless to say, the Latino

3 population contributed to the diversity and richness  
4 of most every city across our nation, including New  
5 York City. Of course, our home, which is also home  
6 to a thriving and growing Latino population of at  
7 least 2.3 million people. According to the most  
8 recent census data, the Latino population is the  
9 largest ethnic minority in the country, and it is  
10 ever growing.

11 The contributions of Latinos in the  
12 United States whether it's in government, civic life,  
13 the armed forces, business, entertainment, fine arts,  
14 fashion, culinary arts, music, sports, and so many  
15 other areas are undeniable. A museum dedicated to  
16 the Latino experience in the United States would,  
17 therefore, paint a more complete picture of our  
18 nation's history. The creation of the American  
19 Latino Museum would also exemplify a commitment to  
20 the arts, diversity, to culture, and inclusivity.

21 Indeed, the history of this country cannot accurately  
22 be told without the inclusion of Latinos and Latinos.

23 I look forward to hearing more today about the  
24 importance of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum,  
25 and all of the factors to be considered before its  
creation. And I truly hope our resolution helps

2 encourage our representatives in Washington, D.C. to  
3 act quickly.

4 I want to thank Tonya Cyrus, our  
5 Committee's Policy Analyst, Anita Kilauan, our  
6 Committee's Counsel, and all the staff helping to  
7 prepare for this hearing. And now it is our distinct  
8 honor and privilege to hand this over to our Speaker  
9 and the sponsor of this very important resolution,  
10 Melissa Mark-Viverito.

11 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Well, good  
12 afternoon, [Speaking Spanish]. Thank you Majority  
13 Leader, and Chair of this great committee. I'm  
14 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. I want to thank  
15 everyone that is here to testify on this important  
16 matter. And it's great to see our friends and  
17 colleagues in the audience, but in particular  
18 Congressman Jose Serrano who is here. Thank you so  
19 much for joining us.

20 I really want to talk about this  
21 important topic. As we said, it's a resolution that  
22 would-- We're looking at new Resolution No. 405,  
23 which calls upon Congress to pass and the President  
24 to sign H.R. 1217 and S. 568, which would establish  
25 the Smithsonian American Latino Museum, and designate

2 the Arts and Industries Building as its future  
3 location in Washington, D.C. And I'm proud to be the  
4 sponsor of this important resolution. As has been  
5 indicated according to the most recent census data,  
6 the Latino population in the largest minority in the  
7 United States. There are approximately 53 million  
8 people of Latino descent that are living in this  
9 country, and over 2.3 million is right here in New  
10 York City.

11           The Latino population of the U.S. is  
12 projected to be 132 million in 2050. That's up from  
13 where we are today at 53 million, but it will  
14 constitute 32% of the nation's total population. The  
15 Latino experience is deeply woven into the American  
16 story. Latinos have played a pivotal role in shaping  
17 the history and trajectory of the U.S. from  
18 immigration to service in war, to building cities, to  
19 advancing the American dream. Latinos have made  
20 significant contributions to our nation including  
21 arts, sciences, and the economy. Latino leaders,  
22 pioneers and communities enrich the cultural fabrics  
23 of our nation and our city. Latinos have broken  
24 glass ceilings, and are leaders in non-profit  
25 organizations, advocacy groups, and corporations.

2 Many such individuals are among us here today.

3 Latinos also serve in government at every level. It  
4 is clear to see this in the New York City Council, in  
5 Congress, and even among the nine Justices in the New  
6 York Supreme Court. I stand before you proud to be  
7 the first Puerto Rican young person Latino to hold a  
8 citywide elected position.

9 Often the histories of people of color  
10 are forgotten or rewritten. This museum will  
11 physically institutionalize the memory and history of  
12 Latinos in America creating opportunities for  
13 generations of all Americans to develop a greater  
14 understanding of Latino culture, history, and  
15 heritage. This museum would also foster a more  
16 comprehensive understanding of America itself. It is  
17 therefore of utmost importance that Congress pass the  
18 bills to establish the Smithsonian American Latino  
19 Museum. And I look forward to hearing more about  
20 this from those that are going to testify.

21 And I was just commenting to the Majority  
22 Leader before that we're only about 2,000 Tweets the  
23 Latino Museum Twitter handle has about 171,000  
24 commenters. So obviously, there is a lot of support  
25 in different sectors. And so, I appreciate everyone

3 that has helped us put together this hearing today.

4 I look forward to hearing the testimony and support  
5 for this resolution. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
7 much, Madam Speaker, and you are, of course, a part  
8 of the history in such a very big way with your  
9 amazing leadership here in the City Council.  
10 Speaking of amazing leadership, we are thrilled and  
11 honored to be joined today by Congressman Jose  
12 Serrano, who is a great leader in that history in so  
13 many ways, and I'd like to ask him to come forward  
14 and testify before the committee. And, of course, I  
15 could not have Congressman Serrano here without  
16 recognizing his son, State Senator. Jose Serrano was  
17 chair of this committee when he was in the New York  
18 City Council. So welcome, Congressman Serrano.

19 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chairman, and yes it's true I hold a special place in  
21 my heart for this committee not only because prior to  
22 politics I was involved with something called the  
23 South Bronx Community Action Theater. But because my  
24 son followed it up by working for the Public Theater,  
25 and then becoming Chairman of this Committee. And

3 now Chairman of a similar committee in the State  
4 Senate.

5 I'm very pleased to be with you here  
6 today, and with our Speaker, Mr. Koo, and all of the  
7 folks who are staff members who played such a role in  
8 this. I'll be really honest with you. I actually  
9 started out in politics 40 years ago. I wanted why  
10 the City Council would have resolutions asking  
11 Congress to do something. Then when I got to  
12 Congress, I was actually bothered by having the City  
13 Council asking Congress to do something. And then I  
14 grew up, and realized that it helps in forcing other  
15 people to understand the full significance of the  
16 issue. In other words, what you're doing today is  
17 totally, totally proper and totally healthy by making  
18 my job then easier to go and face other folks. And  
19 so I'm very pleased to be here today, and thank you  
20 for the opportunity to testify before you in passing  
21 legislation to designate the Arts and Industries  
22 Building as the future site for the Smithsonian  
23 National Museum for the American Latino.

24 I do deeply appreciate that this  
25 committee is taking the time to explore this issue in  
greater depth as it is a subject that I truly care

2 about. I have been a long-time supporter of  
3 establishing this museum, and I am well aware of the  
4 legislative challenges it currently faces in  
5 Congress. I applaud the Friends of the National  
6 Museum of the American Latino for championing this  
7 issue. I am glad to be part of such a historic  
8 effort to finally grant a place in our nation's  
9 Capitol to honor the tremendous contributions of  
10 Latino men and women to our country.

11           Latinos and Latinos have been an integral  
12 part of the United States for over a couple hundred  
13 years. Although the community was quite small in the  
14 earliest days of our nation, that is if you don't  
15 count territories we took when there were all  
16 Latinos. We're not going to go into that subject  
17 today. It was officially quite small, but  
18 unofficially quite large. It had been an integral  
19 part of 200 and it was small in the beginning due to  
20 this undeniable fact. Now it stands as one of the  
21 largest minority groups in the United States. And we  
22 as a nation to need to recognize the importance of  
23 this community by constructing a Museum on a national  
24 mall. That this museum will be addressing the  
25 underrepresentation of American Latino art and

3 culture in the Smithsonian Institution. And that's  
4 important to note that it's not just building a  
5 museum. It's also the fact that the Smithsonian has  
6 not done what is right, and by building this museum  
7 we move forward to us getting the Smithsonian to do  
8 what it should have done many years ago.

9 This museum can teach the American people  
10 about the great contributions that Latinos have given  
11 our country from the great Roberto Clemente in  
12 baseball to the talented Jamie Rivera in music to  
13 Justice Sonia Sotomayor in the Supreme Court. The  
14 United States has been deeply enriched by the Latino  
15 community. I must say it's our first Latino-Puerto  
16 Rican Speaker in the New York City Council, who most  
17 certainly already had a place in that museum, and I  
18 can assure you of that.

19 The United States is better, stronger,  
20 and more diverse because we're a nation of  
21 immigrants, and I must say migrants also. A nation  
22 of people from around the world who contribute each  
23 day to our culture and history. Each year millions  
24 of people visit Washington, D.C. to learn about our  
25 government, our history, and our culture.

Establishing the American Latino Museum will not only

2 teach our fellow citizens about the importance of the  
3 Latino culture, but it will also show the world who  
4 we are as a nation, a nation enriched by cultures  
5 from around the world. I commend this committee for  
6 bringing attention to this issue by starting a public  
7 discussion in New York City. As a New Yorker, I am  
8 particularly pleased that so many members of the City  
9 Council have taken a keen interest in the American  
10 Latino Museum. You can continue counting on my  
11 upmost support for the museum, and I am confident  
12 that together we can and will establish the museum  
13 for all Americans. Again, I thank you for this  
14 opportunity and qualify my earlier statement again by  
15 saying that I find that it is important for local  
16 bodies to speak on this issue.

17 Let me before I end, Mr. Chairman, say  
18 something that is a mantra with me in Congress. When  
19 we speak of the United States, we always speak about  
20 50 states, but there are 50 states and there are  
21 territories. And for this Latino museum, and perhaps  
22 you can put this in your resolution or add to it.  
23 For this museum to be truly a Latino museum, it can't  
24 just speak about Latinos who succeeded within the 50

2 states. It has to speak about contributions of  
3 Latinos in those territories.

4 I'll give an example, and I dare tread on  
5 holy ground here because he is probably one of the  
6 greatest Puerto Ricans of all time. Roberto Clemente  
7 is an icon, a symbol of who we are as a people.  
8 Roberto's accomplishments as a professional were  
9 within the 50 states. But there are people in Puerto  
10 Rico right now in the Virgin Islands in Samoa and  
11 other places who are Latinos who are accomplishing  
12 many things in arts and science and other things.  
13 They have to be included in this museum. And I'm  
14 concerned that in the same way someone this morning  
15 on a low-ball TV station said, Well, if we're lucky,  
16 the hurricane won't touch the United States. Sure,  
17 as it goes over Puerto Rico and the Virgin Island it  
18 will touch American citizens, whether people realize  
19 it or not. So I would hope that in joining us in  
20 this fight you and the Speaker and everyone else also  
21 join us in saying it must include Latinos period  
22 regardless of where they reside, as long as there are  
23 Latinos within the United States and its territories.  
24 And thank you so much.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
3 much Congressman for your eloquence and passion, and  
4 for your lifelong love of the arts. I want to  
5 recognize that we've been joined by Council Member  
6 Helen Rosenthal from Manhattan. And as you  
7 mentioned, Speaker Mark-Viverito's history making as  
8 it's in progress actually. I leaned over and said, I  
9 look forward the Melissa Mark-Viverito exhibit at  
10 this museum one day in Washington. But I'd like to  
11 give the Speaker the floor to start with questions--

12 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: [interposing]  
13 Sure.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --of the  
15 Congressman.

16 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you so  
17 much, Chair Van Bramer. Congressman, as always thank  
18 you so much for your work. You are Congressman to  
19 50% of my district. So you are very dear to me, and  
20 obviously to our community. And I think the last  
21 things that you spoke about were very important to  
22 note. And not only for the reasons you cited. But  
23 when you think about the fact that we are U.S.  
24 citizens those that live on the Island, the  
25 contributions that are made that adding to this

2 country as well in terms of serving the distinction  
3 and disproportionate ways in the armed services,  
4 whatever your opinion is about war in general. But,  
5 you know, we have an incredible trajectory of  
6 support. So we definitely don't want any of the  
7 contributions that have been made to be overlooked.  
8 So I think it's really important. You know you say--  
9 You talked a little bit about maybe the opposition,  
10 and I know that there is also the track of  
11 Congresswoman Maloney fighting for the women's  
12 museum. And we've heard about the fact that there's  
13 some opposition to it for whatever reason. I can't  
14 understand why, but what has been the opposition to  
15 being supportive of these bills?

16 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: That's a great  
17 point. Three points I'm going to come up with.  
18 First of all, you and I share the same views on our  
19 country getting involved in wars. But we also share  
20 the view that once you wear the uniform and come back  
21 home, you should be treated equally and with respect  
22 especially the wounded warriors. And so, if for no  
23 other reason, the territory should be included in  
24 this because how can you tell the military history of  
25 this country without including the people who live in

2 the territories. Some of them who never spoke  
3 English. Some of them who never left their homeland  
4 other than to go to war to defend this country, and  
5 to defend our democracy here. So you have to be  
6 involved. The opposition is the foolish one. It's  
7 the one that in a perfect world would make sense, but  
8 we don't live in a perfect world.

9 I've heard from very liberal members of  
10 Congress including-- Not including, they have to be  
11 Democrats if they're very liberal, saying, Why not  
12 just a museum for Americans? And the idea I keep  
13 telling them is to single out the contributions of  
14 certain groups of Americans. And, therefore, it's  
15 important the fact that we're building an African-  
16 American museum on the mall now. And that we will  
17 hopefully and eventually build a Latino museum. So  
18 the opposition comes from two places, and it's not--  
19 One of them is opposition, which is what I just  
20 mentioned to you. The other one is people trying to  
21 find space for their own cores. A woman's museum,  
22 which is something that we respect and we support,  
23 and other kinds of museums.

24 But as the population grows, as  
25 politically the community grows to the point where

2 one of the two major parties knows it can't survive  
3 the next election with 74% of its people of this  
4 community voting against them. It changes to the  
5 point with them a Latino museum becomes very much a  
6 part number one. Number 2 and lastly, the Latino has  
7 been part of the history since the beginning, since  
8 the beginning of this country's creation. And so to  
9 just single out their contributions, our  
10 contributions within the American city-- If you were  
11 just-- If you were building a museum about Puerto  
12 Rican culture on a national mall, one could argue how  
13 does that fit into the larger picture.

14 But this is different. This is about  
15 what we have contributed as a community to the larger  
16 picture to make this country what it is today. To  
17 make this country the strong country that it is. And  
18 so, the opposition in those cases is just people who  
19 want their own museum, and they at times sound  
20 valuable. In general, we have a lot of support.  
21 Here's one point that I don't know if I should be  
22 saying in public, but I didn't consult with my  
23 political consultants, which number zero. Which is  
24 do we mention this in public? The reason you don't  
25 see a lot of co-sponsors at this moment is that our

2 plan is for each Republican we pick up we have  
3 hundreds of Democrats willing to align. But we don't  
4 want a bill that has 150 Democrats and 25 Republicans  
5 because that won't go anywhere especially if they're  
6 still in the majority. So, you know, even I myself  
7 do not appear as a sponsor of the bill while I'm a  
8 creator of the bill. And the minute that we open up  
9 more Republicans, we fill in with Democrats to try to  
10 make it a bi-partisan bill.

11 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Well, I  
12 appreciate it. I want to thank you again for your  
13 support of this. We are happy to lend our voice in a  
14 small way, and hopefully it will continue to build  
15 our momentum so that we do see the support. And  
16 obviously, the Smithsonian having a responsibility,  
17 right, to also work with--

18 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: [interposing] Yes.

19 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: --us on this is  
20 important to note as well. So, I'll leave it there  
21 because I know we have other panels, which we can  
22 also engage with them on other aspects of the  
23 institution itself. But thank you very much,  
24 Congressman.

25

2 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: My pleasure. Thank  
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
5 much, Madam Speaker. I want to recognize we've been  
6 joined by Council Member Costa Constantinides, also  
7 from Queens and a member of our Committee. And  
8 Congressman, I just wanted to-- I was thrilled to  
9 hear you say that you thought that this could be  
10 helpful in pushing this along. And I was wondering  
11 in furtherance of that, do you have a timeline in  
12 mind or how is this going to be helpful in pushing  
13 this forward as quickly as possible? And maybe the  
14 folks from the actual Friends of the Museum will  
15 speak more to this, but--

16 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: [interposing]  
17 Right.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --in terms of  
19 how quickly would you like to see it?

20 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: Well, I'd like to  
21 see it right away. If I may, I will touch on the  
22 subject that shouldn't be at hearings, but it's  
23 everywhere we go these days, and that's the political  
24 question. I suspect once the elections are over,  
25 assuming for a second that the House of

2 Representatives continues under Republic leadership,  
3 I suspect that after November you're going to see a  
4 lot of action heading to the real Latino community as  
5 we move to the 2016 Presidential election. Because  
6 that particular party can continue to win local  
7 elections, but will have a hard time winning national  
8 elections with 74% of Latinos voting against it.  
9 It's just a hard fact. So you're going to see  
10 immigration issues. What? I don't know. You're  
11 going to see movement on the Latino Museum, and  
12 you're going to see a lot of things happening. And  
13 as demographics change, and districts become more  
14 Latino in many areas where they were not before, now  
15 you're going to see people themselves saying let's do  
16 something about it.

17           And then the last point, which is very  
18 important is you have areas like Florida, for  
19 instance, which are now swing states for both  
20 parties. And both parties want to out-Latino  
21 themselves in Florida. You know, Who is more Latino?  
22 I am, you know. So these issues then come into play.  
23 And lastly, and I know you don't do this, but never  
24 underestimate the power of New York City in telling  
25 people what to do. In fact, we Puerto Ricans have

2 been lying to ourselves for years. We continue to  
3 say that San Juan is the capitol of Puerto Rico. The  
4 truth is that New York is the capital of Puerto Rico,  
5 and it's been like that for a long time. San Juan  
6 may be on the map, but we know where the capitol is,  
7 and that's in the Bronx. It's been like that for a  
8 long, long time, and I came here when I was six years  
9 old. So I know for a fact.

10 So the New York City Council with a  
11 Latina Speaker with a Puerto Rican Speaker, with you  
12 as Chairman of this Committee, with the  
13 progressiveness that has been shown in the few months  
14 that you've taken over this government, I think goes  
15 a long way in convincing a lot of people. And, it  
16 may even make some New York members of Congress, who  
17 are a little uneasy or don't know how to move, move  
18 faster than they are moving right now on this issue.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I believe that  
20 and hope that that is the course of action. I want  
21 to thank you, Congressman Serrano, for everything  
22 that you've done. I don't believe there are any more  
23 questions. I think the speaker said it all, and we  
24 do have some other panelists, but we're honored to  
25 have you here today. The Serrano family has a long

2 and very proud legacy here in the City of New York  
3 that is ongoing needless to say. And your son  
4 Senator Serrano is simply terrific, and a great--

5 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: [interposing] Yes,  
6 he is.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --patron of the  
8 arts. And I love working with State Senator Serrano  
9 and I'm proud to chair the committee that he once  
10 chaired.

11 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: Thank you so much.  
12 I'm very proud of him. He's doing a great job, and  
13 my only sadness at times, if I may sound a little  
14 dramatic Latino, is that my parents are not around to  
15 see their son and their grandson and what we've done.  
16 And that's part of what they did. They made American  
17 history. They made Latino history by working the  
18 factories. They made Latino and American history by  
19 picketing to get one hour of Spanish TV. Now we have  
20 networks that I don't even-- In Spanish. Now, we  
21 have networks I can't even keep up with. Today De  
22 Ario [sp?] and La Prensa, there were two different  
23 newspapers that sold in the Bronx when it wasn't sold  
24 in the Bronx. I mean people had to get a permit to  
25 play baseball at St. Mary's Park. To get a beer

2 license for Braveda [sp?], to get a license to cut  
3 hair on 149th Street. To open the first Gucci  
4 Theater [sic] above 161st Street in the Bronx. These  
5 are the smaller things that maybe won't show up at  
6 the museum. But these are part of the history. And  
7 my parents are part of it, and my family has been  
8 part of it, and I'm pretty proud of that.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you for  
10 sharing that.

11 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And thank you so  
13 much for being with us, Congressman. And I will now  
14 call the second panel.

15 CONGRESSMAN SERRANO: Thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And now we will  
17 hear from Estuardo Rodriguez, Friends of the American  
18 Latino Museum.

19 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: [off mic]

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And Sid Wilson  
21 also from the Friends Of the American Latino Museum,  
22 and Juan Cartagena, Latino Justice PRLDEL. PRLDEF,  
23 of course. And why don't we start with you Mr.  
24 Rodriguez, and go down the line, and we have one more  
25 panel after this.

2 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon,  
3 esteemed members of the New York City Council. It is  
4 my honor to sit before representatives of our  
5 nation's largest and most storied city. And I  
6 sincerely thank all of you for the invitation. I am  
7 especially grateful to Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito  
8 whose leadership and foresight on this issue is  
9 critical to creating this opportunity for our  
10 campaign.

11 My name is Estuardo Rodriguez, and I  
12 serve as the Executive Director of the Friends of the  
13 American Latino Museum. I am also an alumnus of  
14 Saint John's University School of Law, Jamaica-Queens  
15 on the F Line. So I am especially honored to be back  
16 in New York to be part of this panel and provide  
17 testimony in support of the campaign that I and my  
18 team have put our heart and soul into for over the  
19 last eight years.

20 The Friends of the American Latino Museum  
21 is the only organization exclusively dedicated to the  
22 creation of the National Smithsonian American Latino  
23 Museum in our nation's capitol. For the last eight  
24 years we have been working to push forth a campaign  
25 to build this museum through our national network,

2 our National Coalition building communications and  
3 marketing techniques, advocacy work, and fundraising  
4 plans. We are the only current museum initiative  
5 that has presented a commission report on the  
6 feasibility of a museum to the President of the  
7 United States and Congress. We have a larger social  
8 media following than any existing Smithsonian Museum  
9 number over 145,000 on Facebook and 172,000 on  
10 Twitter, and a larger list of email addresses and  
11 supporters from across the country.

12 We have created a board of national  
13 leaders representing quintessential American  
14 companies like Facebook, Coca-Cola, J.P. Morgan  
15 Chase, and Exxon Mobil, as well as landmark civil  
16 rights, and advocacy organizations that include  
17 LULAC, AARP, and Global Latino. Working with our  
18 board of directors we have traveled across the United  
19 States to expand our network of supporting major  
20 Hispanic markets, as well as markets with a new and  
21 growing Latino populations. To do this, we have  
22 activated local leaders in cities from Houston to  
23 Miami, to Minneapolis, and hosted town halls with  
24 premier institutions like Rice University, and the  
25 University of Southern California. We have hosted

2 panels and exhibit at major conferences such as the  
3 National Council of La Raz's National Conference, and  
4 South by Southwest and many more.

5           Because we do not think we should have to  
6 wait any longer to highlight the many American Latino  
7 stories that built this nation, this year we launched  
8 the Inaugural American-Latino Influencer Awards. The  
9 first one was held in Houston followed by one in Las  
10 Vegas with an upcoming event in Miami, Florida. This  
11 award ceremony serves to commemorate and share the  
12 history, and leadership of the American Latinos in  
13 the arts, public service, and corporate sectors. Our  
14 honorees for these awards included public servants  
15 from both sides of the aisle including Senate  
16 Majority Leader Harry Reid, and his Republican  
17 counterpart in Nevada, Senator Dean Heller, museum  
18 curators, local leaders, and more.

19           Through all of our events we are not only  
20 conveying the campaign's urgency to give American  
21 Latinos a national platform where one does not  
22 currently exist. But we are also responding to the  
23 same urgency each community has expressed. Every  
24 city where we have shared our campaign has brought  
25 with it a sampling of the unique sacrifice and

1 contributions of Latino families to our nation.  
2  
3 Stories of service to the nation that date back  
4 before the first World War to the wars currently  
5 waged in the Middle East. American Latino servicemen  
6 and women are there. Americans of every ethnicity,  
7 every corner of the country, and every economic  
8 background feel that this museum is long overdue. In  
9 fact, it is clear that it is long overdue not only to  
10 us, but the Smithsonian itself has known for at least  
11 20 years that this museum is long overdue.

12           This year we have a disappointing  
13 obligation to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the  
14 Smithsonian's own report on Latino representation  
15 with the institution. The report is entitled,  
16 *Willful Neglect* because it found that Latinos are the  
17 most severely underrepresented group throughout the  
18 Smithsonian's programs and exhibits. So neglected  
19 were Latinos throughout the Smithsonian, that it is  
20 almost-- that it almost appears international. It is  
21 a disappointing obligation because after 20 years,  
22 much work still remains. The report specifically  
23 recommended the Smithsonian immediately begin the  
24 establishment of an American Latino museum. But 20  
25 years later we are still fighting for it.

2 Which brings us to the next step in our  
3 campaign, the reason for today's proposed resolution.  
4 The need to pass the Smithsonian American Latino  
5 Museum Act. The next piece of legislation does one  
6 very important thing. This piece of legislation does  
7 one very important thing, and that is it gives the  
8 museum a home, and commissions a study to determine  
9 the costs associated with creating the museum. What  
10 this bill does is critical to our progress. The home  
11 it proposes for the museum is the Arts and the  
12 Industries Building on the National Mall. The Arts  
13 and Industries Building is registered as a national  
14 historic site, and has been vacant for some time  
15 after it fell into disrepair. This is the second  
16 oldest building on the National Mall, and more  
17 importantly it is the last possible space for a  
18 museum on the mall, our nation's front yard. The  
19 National Mall is home to many of the Smithsonian's  
20 hallmark museums, American History, Natural History,  
21 American Indian, and soon the African-American  
22 History Museum of Culture and Art, just to name a  
23 few. The Smithsonian American Latino Museum belongs  
24 among them.

3 When buses of school children from all  
4 over the nation, tour groups from all over the world,  
5 and college kids on their D.C. summer internships  
6 want to learn about our nation and its history, they  
7 go to the National Mall. The Mall has over 30  
8 million visitors per year. The story of our nation's  
9 largest community of color, one that has been  
10 represented on this soil since even before the  
11 founding of Jamestown must have equal representation  
12 on the National Mall. We will accept nothing less.  
13 That is why this resolution is so important. That is  
14 why the support of New York City, a city without  
15 rivals and its diversity, grandeur and prominence in  
16 American history will get us closer to the passage of  
17 this Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act. I thank  
18 you very much for your invitation again, and your  
19 time.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
21 much for your testimony, and I want to thank you for  
22 including your Saint John's University heritage. I,  
23 too, am a graduate of Saint John's University. So I  
24 thank you for including that. I do want to recognize  
25 we've been joined by three very distinguished members  
of our committee, our Finance Chair Julissa Ferreras;

2 Lori Cumbo, Council Member Laurie Cumbo from  
3 Brooklyn; and Council Member Steve Levin also from  
4 Brooklyn. So we are all here, and if you would start  
5 your testimony.

6 SID WILSON: Thank you, Chairman. Good  
7 afternoon Chairman Van Bramer, Madam Speaker Mark-  
8 Viverito, and all of the members of the New York City  
9 Council Cultural Affairs Committee. I thank you for  
10 this invitation to testify on Resolution 405. My  
11 name is Sid Wilson. I serve as the Board Chairman of  
12 the Friends of the American Latino Museum. I am also  
13 a former Commissioner Appointee of the President of  
14 the United States, Barack Obama who appointed me to  
15 the National Museum of the American Latino Study  
16 Commission. I want to thank all the council members  
17 who support this resolution. I have been a part of  
18 the National Museum and American Latino Movement for  
19 the last eight years, of which two have been as an  
20 appointee to the Study Commission.

21 In September 2009, President Barack Obama  
22 appointed me to join the 23-member Study Commission  
23 to prepare a feasibility study on the prospects of  
24 building a new Smithsonian American Latino Museum.  
25 As part of this bi-partisan study, which I want to

2 underline as very bi-partisan, in which 13 Democrats  
3 and 10 Republicans came together as part of the  
4 commission. We toured the country. Hosted forums  
5 and town hall meetings in 11 major cities including  
6 New York City where we hosted an open forum at Hunter  
7 College on June 19, 2010. After nearly two years of  
8 conducting the study, we presented our feasibility  
9 report directly to President Obama, and to Congress  
10 on May 5th of 2011. As part of the report, we  
11 indicated that the Smithsonian Arts and Industries  
12 Building would be the best site for future  
13 Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

14 We also conducted a fundraising strategy  
15 where we serve as key funder to assess the capacity  
16 to raise the needed funds for the construction and  
17 operation of a new Smithsonian American Latino  
18 Museum, including foundations, high net worth  
19 individuals, and corporations. Our Fundraising is  
20 Study on the website for the Friends of the American  
21 Latino Museum, which is [www.americanlatinomuseum.org](http://www.americanlatinomuseum.org).  
22 It will have the report, which also shows the  
23 fundraising strategy, which we document there. And  
24 shows that we do have the capacity to raise the

2 private sector portion of the full budget needed to  
3 building a new Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

4           This project has overwhelming national  
5 support in the Latino community. We have the largest  
6 social media following, the Friends of the American  
7 Latino Museum of any major Latino organization in the  
8 country, and we have more followers than any other  
9 Smithsonian institution despite the fact that our  
10 building hasn't been built yet. Despite the public  
11 acknowledgment by President Obama that he would sign  
12 the bill if passed. Despite the fact that for the  
13 last 20 years there's been a clear omission of our  
14 Latino history and culture in a permanent capacity in  
15 the Smithsonian Institution as documented by the  
16 report *Willful Neglect*, which Estuardo mentioned  
17 earlier. Which documented the lack of Latino  
18 presence in the Smithsonian.

19           Despite the fact that the Smithsonian has  
20 successfully created new museums, including the  
21 National Museum of the American Indian, and the soon-  
22 to-be built National Museum of African-American  
23 History and Culture, which will be open in 2015.  
24 Both of which being on the National Mall, and despite  
25 the strong bi-partisan support to build a new

2 American Latino Museum on the National Mall in the  
3 Smithsonian Arts and Industries building as  
4 demonstrated by the sponsors of the bills in the  
5 House and Senate. Despite all of that, Congress has  
6 continued to stall on this bill.

7           By passing Resolution 405, the New York  
8 City Council will send a strong message to congress  
9 that this bill is a priority legislation that should  
10 be passed in this congressional session. After all,  
11 this bill is calling on Congress to pass a bill that  
12 will eliminate an American story, the 500-year  
13 history of Latino influence in the United States.

14           Let me conclude by sharing a personal  
15 example of the importance of this museum. I was born  
16 in Washington Heights, New York City. My parents  
17 immigrated together to New York City from the  
18 Dominican Republic. They came from a city called  
19 Marona. While I grew up knowing all about the recent  
20 migration of Dominicans in the U.S. over the last 50  
21 years, it wasn't until 2012 through the Cuban  
22 Dominican Studies Institute at City College that I  
23 learned that the first Dominican to settle in New  
24 York City was Juan Rodriguez who migrated from Santo  
25 Domingo to New York in 1613.

3 This is just one of thousands of examples  
4 of many histories that will be told in a future  
5 Smithsonian American Latino Museum along with the  
6 rich histories of St. Augustine, Florida, Santa Fe,  
7 New Mexico, which often is not recognized, I am told  
8 as the oldest state capital in the country, Santa Fe,  
9 New Mexico. The early Mexican-American settlers in  
10 the American west. The history of the early Puerto  
11 Ricans who came to New York. Latinos who  
12 participated in the American wars include the  
13 Lincolneers [sic]. Latino's discoveries, Latino  
14 innovations, historical accomplishments by American  
15 Latinos including our civil rights leaders and  
16 organizations.

17 By passing Resolution 405, the New York  
18 City Council will be sending a message to Congress  
19 that our American story must be told in a permanent  
20 site. So that all Americans of all backgrounds today  
21 and in future generations can benefit from learning  
22 the full American story, the history of the American  
23 Latino. And so with that, I just want to express my  
24 sincere thanks to the New York City Council, to this  
25 Committee, to you Chairman Van Bramer, to you Madam  
Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. And we appreciate

2 that because together we believe that we will pass  
3 this bill, which will illuminate the American story,  
4 the story of the American Latino.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, and--

6 JUAN CARTAGENA: Jimmy Van Bramer, thank  
7 you so much for inviting me. My name is Juan  
8 Cartagena. I'm the President and General Counsel of  
9 Latino Justice PRLDEF formally known as the Puerto  
10 Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund. And Council  
11 Member Mark-Viverito, good to see you again. Thank  
12 you so much for being here. Chairman, if you will  
13 allow me, I can in less than 24 hours just give you a  
14 two-pager that will summarize exactly what I'm going  
15 to say today for the record.

16 I will talk to you about two unique New  
17 York stories that will support your consideration of  
18 this resolution, Resolution 405 to support both the  
19 establishment and the designation location of the  
20 Smithsonian Museum on the American Latino. And they  
21 are two unique New York stories. I come from a legal  
22 perspective. The development of the law in this  
23 country and its ability to actually affect the  
24 quality of necessities, the need for need for equal  
25 right across all Americans in this country has been

3 largely developed both through the case law in  
4 Superior Court. But also through examples that often  
5 times emanate in the Latino community. And the  
6 museum itself will have a wonderful exposition I'm  
7 sure of how that law developed. And we could talk  
8 about how *Mendez v. Westminster* in 1940 was a  
9 precursor to *Brown v. Board of Education* where the  
10 lawyers both David Marshall and Robert Carter right  
11 here in New York City supported the efforts to  
12 desegregate California's public schools eight years  
13 before *Brown*. Sylvia Mendez is still alive today.  
14 It was a child who was not allowed to go to school  
15 with Whites in California. Her mother was Puerto  
16 Rican and her father was Mexican. That lawsuit was  
17 extremely successful, and laid this groundwork for  
18 eventual national limine of desegregation in our  
19 public schools.

20           Years later, in another very important  
21 called *Hernandez v. Texas* in a Supreme Court action  
22 said effectively the following: That the equal  
23 protection clause, the basis of all of our anti-  
24 discrimination laws cannot just operate on a two-  
25 racial class theory. It has to go beyond Black and  
White relationships. It also is for Latino Americans

2 in this country. And most recently *Plyler v. Doe*,  
3 another very famous case of the Supreme Court said  
4 that undocumented children, minor children, cannot be  
5 denied a free public education. The most basic  
6 rights are free education because education is so  
7 important.

8 But here's the amazing New York story for  
9 this Museum. New York City is the home of how an  
10 electoral system in the largest city in the country  
11 at the time in the 1970s and still the largest city  
12 today, that an electoral system is able to operate in  
13 two languages, Spanish and English, to create both  
14 the foundation of bilingual ballots and bilingual  
15 assistance verbally at the polls. The Congressional  
16 record of the 1970 Amendments-- And this occurred,  
17 by the way, as early as 1965 because the voting since  
18 1965, because the voting since 1965 is not just  
19 merely black and white. There's an amazing provision  
20 called Section 4(e), which helped Puerto Rican  
21 citizens register to vote in a language they can  
22 understand and exercise their right to vote.

23 Five years later, and this is the  
24 paraphrase of the quote that I'm going to give you in  
25 the Congressional record, a senator from Florida

1 said, Well, I would support the establishment of  
2 bilingual elections for other language minorities,  
3 Native Americans, Asians, and, of course, Spanish  
4 languages such as the Mexican-Americans throughout  
5 the country. Because he said, If they can do it in  
6 New York, they can do it anywhere. The unique New  
7 York City story of a voting that was established that  
8 celebrates 50 years next year in 2015 is a story  
9 about how the franchises opened up to all Americans  
10 regardless of their ability to master the English  
11 language.  
12

13           And I will end this with a New York City  
14 point. The Museum for the American Latino will, I'm  
15 sure, also talk about the institutions within this  
16 community throughout its history. And I have the  
17 incredible honor to head up one of those  
18 institutions. The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and  
19 Education Fund was founded right here in New York  
20 City in 1972 by a current Judge Victor Marrero,  
21 Attorney Jorge Batista, who still practices in the  
22 Bronx; and the current Secretary of State for New  
23 York Cesar Perales. They had a vision to help Puerto  
24 Ricans assimilate with the protection of their rights  
25 and dignity into this society. It happened in New

2 York, and in a very short time it will be bringing  
3 lawsuits throughout the country.

4 We are now called the Latino Justice  
5 PRLDEF, but those acronyms are still the same. And  
6 our reach, our scope and our influence was born here.  
7 That institution, I'm sure, would also be reflected  
8 in the exhibits of this important museum. So thank  
9 you very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
11 much for all of your testimonies. I know there are  
12 some questions from the council members, but Speaker  
13 Melissa Mark-Viverito has some questions before she  
14 has to go.

15 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you, Chair,  
16 and thank you, Juan, for putting it in that context  
17 because I think it really gives an understanding.  
18 And I think also the understanding of bilingual  
19 education also that originated here in terms of the  
20 Bilingual Consent to Create. I think there is  
21 history, the story about how that impacts nationwide  
22 and that it was families and individuals and women  
23 probably at the forefront of those struggles. So I  
24 appreciate that.

2 I had a question for the committee, for  
3 Sid and I'm sorry. Estuardo. We have a letter, a  
4 copy of a letter that was sent to you, Sid, I think  
5 from October 7th from the Smithsonian, which I don't  
6 know. There are concerns I have about some of the  
7 language in there, and you didn't-- You guys never,  
8 you guys never-- Neither of you mentioned it in your  
9 testimony, but I think it things to be concerned  
10 about. First of all, they talk about, as we have  
11 said on many occasions the Smithsonian is authorized  
12 and funded by Congress. The Smithsonian would be  
13 honored to have this new museum added to the  
14 Smithsonian family. I don't see that in our  
15 background information. The bills that are in  
16 Congress, do they also talk about designation of  
17 funds for the museum, or is this primarily just on  
18 the feasibility side or what is being called forms of  
19 legislation?

20 SID WILSON: I'm happy to start. You  
21 know, this definitely dives into the weaves of the  
22 political process, which is much like we all know  
23 making sausage, right. It's not always pretty. The  
24 letter that you are referencing address the actual  
25 legislation that was crafted by Congressman Xavier

2 Bacerra with Congresswoman Illeana Ros-Lehtinen.

3 They are very much attuned to what the political  
4 climate is on Capitol Hill, and that is that anything  
5 with the words "appropriations" tied to it will go  
6 nowhere. The bills for the African-American Museum  
7 and the Native American Museum passed at a different  
8 time.

9 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I'm sorry. Can  
10 you repeat that.

11 SID WILSON: They passed at a different  
12 time--

13 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: [interposing]  
14 Right.

15 SID WILSON: --a different era where  
16 appropriations were not frowned up. The legislation  
17 as it is crafted now, does not designate-- Or let me  
18 rephrase that. It does not require the Smithsonian  
19 to start fundraising. The legislation, and this is  
20 the conversation, and debate that we've been having  
21 with the Smithsonian just very recently. And that is  
22 that this bill needs to be clean in the sense of any  
23 appropriations request. It is asking for the  
24 designation of the American Smithsonian Arts and  
25 Industries Building as the future home of the museum.

2 And asking for a commission to undergo an 18-month  
3 study to uncover the costs in converting the A&I  
4 Building into an American Latino Museum. It does not  
5 require them actually build this museum, or start  
6 fundraising for it. The conversation that we had  
7 with the Under-Secretary as referenced in that letter  
8 is the sense that he gets from the legislation, that  
9 it does require him to fundraise. And the fact that  
10 it doesn't mention any appropriations like the other  
11 museums that I mentioned. As Congressman--

12 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: [interposing] So  
13 then if I may then just interject--

14 SID WILSON: Go ahead.

15 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: --because  
16 understanding the dynamics and obviously the reality  
17 and the politics of Congress I understood what you  
18 said. But then the language even of this institution  
19 worries me more because it doesn't really sound like  
20 a full-throated support of this, right? In the  
21 letter it says that as with any new venture of this  
22 magnitude, the availability of financial resources  
23 from the very onset of the project will be essential  
24 to the viability of the museum. And federal funds

2 are an important tool for leveraging private  
3 philanthropy.

4 So they are kind of making that a deal  
5 breaker, right. And then they say, Finally, creating  
6 the Smithsonian American Latino Museum prior to the  
7 completion of fundraising for the actual museum of  
8 African-American History and Culture would place a  
9 significant burden on the Smithsonian. And so they  
10 don't think that they could do both projects--

11 SID WILSON: [interposing] Right.

12 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: --at the same  
13 time.

14 SID WILSON: Right, right.

15 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: I mean there's--  
16 And I'm not saying-- I mean this-- Obviously, we  
17 support and I support the Reso, and I believe my  
18 colleagues will. But you've raised concerns in your  
19 testimony about the Smithsonian in general about the  
20 lack of real serious attention being paid to having  
21 our history reflected in the existing museums. And  
22 this kind of language, you know, further lends  
23 concern--

24 SID WILSON: [interposing] Sure.  
25

2 SARAH MEYERS: --about what extent their  
3 support is there.

4 SID WILSON: And in working with  
5 Congressman Xavier Bacerra he has reached out to the  
6 Smithsonian, and we have also reached out to them.  
7 The political process, as we have outlined it, is  
8 that this piece of legislation is critical for us to  
9 put a placeholder on the Arts and Industries  
10 Building. There are many competing campaigns out  
11 there. We need to put a placeholder on it. That's  
12 what this legislation does. And then as the  
13 Commission Report outlined, 50% of the money that is  
14 estimated to be required to build this museum, \$650  
15 million. \$325 million of that, which needs to come  
16 from the community and from the private sector, et  
17 cetera. That next piece of legislation would follow.  
18 So assuming this bill gets passed this year, or in  
19 the next Congress, we would immediately then use that  
20 as a way to start a capital campaign by showing  
21 potential funders that we had a place. We can  
22 actually raise money through this for this building.  
23 SPEAKER MARK-VIVERITO: And that's great,  
24 and I'm saying that to express disappointment in the  
25 Smithsonian, right. And to say that there's

3 additional pressure of accountability that they have  
4 to be held to. But they can't be pitting communities  
5 against each other, which is what that letter pretty  
6 much indicates. And that there needs to be, you  
7 know, greater accountability on their end to be  
8 responsive to what it is that we're demanding. I  
9 think that hopefully Resos like this will do that,  
10 and there may be subsequent steps that need to be  
11 taken for that message to get across to them as well.

12 SID WILSON: If I could add one more  
13 thing, please know that we have requested a letter  
14 with Secretary Clough of the Smithsonian. He has  
15 agreed to that meeting, and we will be joined by  
16 other national Latino leaders and their organizations  
17 that have supported the museum for over eight years  
18 or more that we've been working on this. So it will  
19 be a meeting probably by the end of this month.

20 JUAN CARTAGENA: And if I could just  
21 really quickly just add that this bill, and actually  
22 as the letter states is that they will support this  
23 if Congress actually passes this bill. Now, where  
24 they mentioned the funding side of this, that's what  
25 many of you know. And that is what many of you know,  
I think someone said or I may be even mentioned this

2 earlier is that in order to get this bill passed so  
3 that we can get the placeholder there. There could  
4 be an appropriation because that was the only way to  
5 get certain members of Congress and the Senate to  
6 sign on to make sure that it was a bi-partisan bill.  
7 And so, in doing that, we now successfully have a bi-  
8 partisan bill, which has Congressman Xavier Bacerra  
9 and Congresswoman-- Congressman Xavier Bacerra on the  
10 Democratic side, and Congresswoman Illeana Ros-  
11 Lehtinen on the Republican side.

12                   And on the Senate side where the bill was  
13 introduced by Senator Harry Reid, and some of the  
14 members on the Democratic, and Senator Marco Rubio on  
15 the Republican side. And then since that point, we  
16 have been able to accumulated more co-sponsors. But  
17 in order for that to happen, it was carefully crafted  
18 that it would be able to get more and broader  
19 support. So if we were to put a bill as the  
20 Smithsonian with a referral you would lose a  
21 significant number of co-sponsors. Which would  
22 effectively cause the bill to not be able to pass.

23                   And one last thing also just really  
24 quickly. In the letter, they mentioned the fact that  
25 hadn't-- They didn't want to start until they

2 finished the African-American Museum. To my memory,  
3 there was overlap when the Smithsonian was finishing  
4 the American Indian Museum while they started the  
5 African-American because I think that commission  
6 started in about 2001, if my memory is right. And  
7 the American Indian I believe was completed around  
8 2005 or 2006, if my memory is right. So there was,  
9 you know, overlap. So that my not necessarily be a  
10 consistent comment.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
12 much both for explaining the sense of urgency around  
13 this particular piece of legislation, which is very,  
14 very helpful to all of us. And, I know that all of  
15 us feel that sense of urgency, and passion around  
16 this issue as well. So, I want to ask Council Member  
17 Julissa Ferreras to ask a few questions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Thank you very  
19 much, our leader and Chair. Thank you. Good to see  
20 friends on the other side of the table. Well, I  
21 guess with the new Administration we see more  
22 friends, too. I just wanted to kind of have this  
23 opportunity. One thing that I find is people  
24 actually watch these hearings. They're interested.  
25 We have more and more engagement.

2 As a Board Member of NALEO, I understand  
3 from a national perspective on how important what  
4 you're doing for our people is. But I also recognize  
5 that our constituents need to play a role. So, can  
6 you I guess express or put on the record how can the  
7 local mom, the PTA president, the boyero [Speaking  
8 Spanish] on the corner started the conversation about  
9 how important it is for us to get this museum up and  
10 running? What's the best way for them to engage?

11 SID WILSON: Well, I guess I'll start,  
12 and thank you Councilwoman. I think the best way to  
13 engage is, you know, we certainly have a major social  
14 media campaign to talk about the history of the  
15 museum. We have great media partners including  
16 Ciudad Mitad del Mundo, who have also helped us to  
17 get the message across. And I think that what's  
18 interesting is that whether the history is for an  
19 educational purpose, whether the history is to make  
20 sure that we're maintaining our culture. I think  
21 that whether you're a PTA mom or boyero [Speaks  
22 Spanish], that you will know that this museum is  
23 important to each of them. You know, if you're the  
24 boyero, you want to understand the history of the  
25 Latinos who are in the agricultural field. And many

2 who migrate here. So that that way there is a sense  
3 of appreciate of the foods and products being sold.  
4 That's important.

5           When you look at the current curriculum  
6 that does not include much of the history of Latinos  
7 in the U.S. that those are important. And we know  
8 that when we understand our history, we're much more  
9 inclined to participate, be involved, be active. And  
10 also to share the story for the next generations. So  
11 I think that what's great about this museum is that  
12 this is for all Americans, not just Latinos. This is  
13 to make sure that every American, and as Estuardo  
14 mention, about 30 million that visit the National  
15 Mall every single year. To make sure that when they  
16 do make that visit that they are able to make an easy  
17 stop into what we would like to be as the Smithsonian  
18 American Latino Museum.

19           COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Can someone  
20 speak about the potential because I'm working with  
21 Majority Leader Van Bramer, and we've done a lot of  
22 work with the Museum of Natural History. So you  
23 don't have to physically go to the museum to  
24 understand the contribution that an institution of  
25 that caliber has on our society. So can you speak on

2 it from the research perspective of like how this can  
3 really change the way we look at a Latino experience.  
4 But also how we may be able to educate our future  
5 generations through being able to organize our  
6 thoughts or our history for a museum?

7 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: Sure. I'm happy to.  
8 I think the best example is what happened when  
9 Justice Sonia Sotomayor was confirmed as a Supreme  
10 Court Justice. I think that you started to hear from  
11 all over the country. If you were a Puerto Rican or  
12 Peruvian American, Mexican American, or it doesn't  
13 matter. You had a Latino on the Supreme Court, and  
14 there is a whole generation of Latino and Latina  
15 youth that can point and say, I could be a Supreme  
16 Court Justice. It is the mere existence of an  
17 example, a role model to put all of these stories  
18 within a museum to see Ellen Ochoa from NASA and  
19 Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. It changes  
20 the conversation and environment. Where people  
21 before found limitations, now they assume it's just  
22 how things should be or are.

23 The campaign that we've been running,  
24 part of the presentation has been that there are  
25 pages and pages in U.S. history books that are blank.

1 That are incomplete, that have hiccups where there is  
2 just a void. They forget to mention only the 500  
3 years of Mexican and Spanish indigenous presence here  
4 that helped shape the United States, but even after  
5 that happened. Many of the history classes that I  
6 took when I was in elementary school started with the  
7 Pilgrims landed on the East Coast, and then as they  
8 moved west they brought civilization. But they  
9 forget to mention the cathedrals and the missions and  
10 the churches, and all of these buildings that were  
11 there, and civilizations that were already very much  
12 used to this land.

14           So I think it changes everything  
15 dramatically for us to push back against some of the  
16 politicking that happens around mid-term elections  
17 and presidential elections. And the fight around  
18 immigration reform in the Latino community. You  
19 know, the crime, the criminals, the children on the  
20 border. It changes that conversation in an immense  
21 way. It makes it more human, and it makes it more  
22 American for us to be able to have those examples on  
23 the National Mall. We're very excited about that,  
24 and hope that it will happen soon.

2 I do want to go back to your previous  
3 question. There are moms and college kids and  
4 [Speaking Spanish] with us who want to do something.  
5 They should go to Americanlatinomuseum.org.  
6 Americanlatinomuseum.org is the base of all  
7 information. Where we go, what we do, what we say  
8 about this campaign and what the status is. And  
9 we're on Facebook and Twitter, it's the American  
10 Latino Museum. You can find it there easily. On  
11 Twitter it's Latino Museum. But what we do when we  
12 present this information, and say we have 172,000  
13 followers on Twitter, New York has the fourth largest  
14 Latino population in the country. If I can just get  
15 you all to sign on and follow my Twitter or my  
16 Facebook account, I'm almost done because the massive  
17 numbers would just blow members of Congress away, and  
18 make them feel like it's an urgent matter.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: That's why I  
20 think it's so great that our Chair decided to bring  
21 this. And it's actually very I think timely. I have  
22 my own issues with Columbus Day not because of it  
23 being tied to the Italian community, which is kind of  
24 even the Greek group or whatever. But I think that's  
25 when you have to talk about our history. And it

2 would be very interesting when we talk about those  
3 experiences, and what that has meant in many of our  
4 countries and Dominican, too. So what it meant for  
5 the Dominican Republic. What it meant for Puerto  
6 Rico. What it meant for Argentina, right? I think  
7 that it's very important that we have a place to have  
8 those stories. And, you know, I'm really excited,  
9 and I'm hoping. I can't commit to all eight million  
10 New Yorkers, but I--

11 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: I think you have.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [laughs] But,  
13 you know, I represent a very diverse district,  
14 Corona, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst East, Elmhurst and  
15 132 languages are spoken in my district. Jimmy is  
16 part of Queens. We are kind of neighbors. So he has  
17 many of the diversities. So I understand the  
18 importance and the challenge. Just my one last  
19 question. I know that you said that you're really  
20 looking for this to be a placeholder. I am  
21 concerned, but I can only imagine that everyone wants  
22 the last building in the mall. And I hate to put  
23 this question to you because you are the leaders, and  
24 you always go for what you want. In the event that

2 this can't happen there, you know, what happens to  
3 these efforts.

4 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: Well, I'm going to  
5 go down the road of hypothetical with you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yes.

7 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: Because I know--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [interposing]  
9 Worst case scenario. We don't want to--

10 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: [interposing] I know  
11 that you may not

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: --ever have any  
13 fatal, you know.

14 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: Right. So, the  
15 Commission Report and seeking kind of justice a  
16 little more, [sic] but the Commission Report actually  
17 did look at an alternate site. It is on the Senate  
18 site. It is currently a parking lot.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [interposing]  
20 The parking lot issue, right. Because--

21 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: [interposing] The  
22 parking lot issue.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: --since  
24 senators are going to lose, and their staff are going  
25 to lose parking.

2 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: Yes. [laughs]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So that's going  
4 to be worse.

5 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: They might lose  
6 parking. Well, more I think the larger concern was  
7 that African-American Museum when it started its  
8 effort they requested that space. And that space was  
9 denied to them. There is a history around that  
10 space. And they did not feel that it was appropriate  
11 even though the African-American History and Art  
12 Museum will open its door in 2015. They simply did  
13 not feel it would be appropriate to now release it to  
14 the American Latino Museum. So, there is that, but  
15 you know, all eyes are fixated--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [interposing]  
17 Absolutely, understood.

18 ESTUARDO RODRIGUEZ: --on that space.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And I just  
20 wanted it for clarification so that I don't-- so that  
21 in the event that something else happens this doesn't  
22 fall through the cracks, and then we have to start  
23 all this stuff again. So I thank you for your  
24 testimony and for your leadership. [Speaks Spanish]

2 SID WILSON: No, no, gracias, and let me  
3 just add that of all-- And you are correct, it is  
4 the last site on the National Mall, and certainly  
5 there are other interests. We're the only group that  
6 has a completed commission where the commissioner has  
7 reported, and we are ready with our recommendation,  
8 which the Congress has introduced based on that  
9 recommendation. So we are way ahead of any other  
10 interested groups that haven't even created the  
11 commission yet much less completed the report and  
12 submitted it to the President, submitted it to  
13 Congress. And then following that having a bill  
14 introduced. So, um, we are the only group that has  
15 already reached that point where now the only thing  
16 that's left is to actually get the bill passed  
17 through Congress.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
19 much, Council Member Ferreras. Thank you to the  
20 three panelists, and I look forward to working with  
21 you all to make sure that this happens. It's the  
22 right thing for our country. With that, I'm going to  
23 call the next panel, which is our last panel.

24 SID WILSON: Thank you.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so  
3 much. Jorge Daniel Veneciano from El Musceo del  
4 Barrio who will be the first one to speak. And Dr.  
5 Marta Moreno Vega who will be next. Is Dr. Marilu  
6 Galvan? Yep. She's talking to Jason. Dr. Galvan?  
7 Dr. Galvan. Yeah, she's here. Thank you. [laughs]  
8 Milagros Baez O'Toole. Ms. Milagros. Right. And  
9 Marilu Galvan. Yeah. There is one more seat over  
10 there. Yeah. Thank you. Jorge, why don't you  
11 begin? Deborah do we have-- Well, we have five  
12 panelists and four chairs. So if we can get one more  
13 chair then we can have all five together. This is  
14 the last panel. Jorge, why don't you begin us off  
15 here?

16 JORGE DANIEL VENECIANO: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so  
18 much.

19 JORGE DANIEL VENECIANO: Good afternoon  
20 Chair Jimmy Van Bramer and distinguished members of  
21 the Committee. I am Jorge Daniel Veneciano. I'm  
22 Executive Director at El Musceo del Barrio in East  
23 Harlem. And as someone who directs the nation's  
24 first American Latino Museum founded 45 years go.  
25 And as someone who also was Director of an American

3 art museum in the heartland of the nation in  
4 Nebraska, I can speak with certain knowledge about  
5 museums and the service they provide this nation.  
6 Therefore, I speak to the resolution before you  
7 regarding the Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act.

8 I am sometimes asked the question, Does  
9 the nation need an American Latino Museum, which is  
10 the implicit question before Congress. Why American  
11 citizens should want an American Latino museum  
12 follows naturally from an understanding of museums  
13 generally. We know already that museums provide  
14 cultural education to children and adults, preserve  
15 our cultural treasures, and produce new scholarship  
16 and understanding for art and culture. These are  
17 social values in themselves. Museums, however, don't  
18 simply matter in society, they matter to society.  
19 They matter in society because they give citizens a  
20 public space, a touch point for cultural connections  
21 to other citizens. They connect diverse peoples to a  
22 social fabric. It is in this way that museums also  
23 matter to society. They help its citizenry cohere.  
24 They help system ladies [sic] reproduce themselves,  
25 that is perpetuate a healthy society, a healthy body  
politic.

3           There is much talk of demographic shifts  
4 in justifying the need for an American Latino museum.  
5 I am in agreement with this position because I think  
6 demographics changes is really the way to argue the  
7 need. Yet, even if demographics remain the same, or  
8 even if they were reversed to levels decades ago, the  
9 need would still persist. The historic presence of  
10 Latinos across the United States warrants an  
11 institution that preserves and presents the  
12 contributions to our culture, our nation.

13           The historical fact that the western and  
14 southwestern United States was once a part of Mexico,  
15 as we heard earlier, also makes clear the presence  
16 and history of Latinos in the United States. The  
17 Smithsonian, one of the great institutions of  
18 American democracy, has 19 museums to its credit  
19 celebrating American art, culture, science and  
20 industry including museums dedicated to the American  
21 Indian and African-American art and culture. A  
22 museum of American-Latino art would, therefore, fall  
23 squarely within the mission and values of this great  
24 institution and it's mission.

25           And here, I think if we think about an  
internal tension that's within the institution that

1 we have, we should look at its mission, which is to  
2 disseminate knowledge. Its vision, which includes to  
3 preserve our heritage, and its values, which include  
4 "diversity", quote, unquote capitalizing on the  
5 richness inherent in the difference. Its priorities,  
6 which include quote "The understanding of the  
7 American experience." A national museum of the  
8 American Latino would help fulfill the cultural and  
9 democratic promise this institution holds for the  
10 nation. But, furthermore, it is hard to imagine the  
11 fulfillment of the institution's mission without such  
12 a museum.

14 All in good time is a phrase we use, we  
15 who manage budgets and allocate resources when we see  
16 a worthy project that we get to-- that we will get to  
17 when resources permit. "Now, is a good time" is a  
18 phrase we can use to designate this worthy project  
19 and request a study of the resources that will  
20 require it to be realized. Now is a good time to  
21 pass Resolution 405, and call upon Congress to pass  
22 and the President to sign H.R. 1217 and S. 568 to  
23 establish the National Museum of the American Latino,  
24 and designate the Smithsonian Arts and Industry  
25 Building as its future home in Washington, D.C. And

2 I thank you and the committee members and your  
3 colleagues at the City Council for bringing this  
4 resolution to a vote. And I am also happy to answer  
5 questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
7 much, Jorge, for your time and I know that you have  
8 another engagement that you must attend to. So I  
9 want to invite you to leave when you must, and I  
10 thank you again for your testimony and your amazing  
11 leadership in El Museo del Barrio. So thank you,  
12 and rest assured with the Speaker being the prime  
13 sponsor and myself the Majority Leader being the co-  
14 prime sponsor of this, I believe it has a good chance  
15 of passing. So we're going to move forward with  
16 this. So why don't we go back to your left with Dr.  
17 Galvan who will testify. Next to them Marta and down  
18 the row. So thank you very much.

19 DR. MARILU GALVAN: ... committee and  
20 also the Chair, and my name is Dr. Galvan from Centro  
21 Civico Cultural Dominicano, the oldest Dominicano  
22 organization. We recently celebrated our 52nd  
23 anniversary, and we also have a very limited museum  
24 in comparison with what we have at this point in time  
25 at the table.

2 I speak for the museum. I speak for  
3 Presidential Congress to pass this proposal. And I  
4 speak for that as an educator at all levels from  
5 children [sic] to adjunct at John Jay College, and  
6 also as an administrator in the area of culture.  
7 Without culture we are not a whole complete  
8 individual. The reason why we have so many  
9 organizations advocating for culture is because once  
10 you know about yourself, you know how to be a good  
11 citizen.

12 Presently, we're talking about the Latino  
13 Museum. Latino, and I'm not going to recount the  
14 whole history, but you all well know the Latino has  
15 been not only instrumental at this point in time in  
16 the development of the everyday life of the United  
17 States. But it is from the beginning that they spoke  
18 already about the western [sic] part. That you all  
19 know about. It was Spanish. It was Spanish. Then  
20 it was Mexican. We know about Florida that it was  
21 directly from the Spanish, it was obtained. So it is  
22 throughout the whole nation of the United States.  
23 This is something that is overdue. Long overdue to  
24 have a Latino Museum.

2 I speak for it because as a community are  
3 instrumental in moving this nation. We also have  
4 demonstrated the number. Our numbers are  
5 significant. Our contributions are significant.  
6 They have been lifted. But I am also concerned about  
7 the everyday individual that are working in those  
8 factories, and that are becoming to be knowledgeable  
9 about their culture, and they are demanding. They  
10 are demanding a place because if you go to the  
11 Metropolitan Museum, you can count the number of  
12 Latinos going there because they are really eager to  
13 learn and to increase their knowledge about what they  
14 know at this point time.

15 A Latino Museum would be instrumental in  
16 providing them not only assurance about their own  
17 heritage, their own culture, but also knowing about  
18 the global aspect. And how we interact with this  
19 society, and within our brothers and sisters from the  
20 Latino community. I know that we don't have too much  
21 time. I know that I have a lot more things to say.  
22 But I really want to emphasize that I do feel that  
23 this is overdue, and that we really beg the committee  
24 to speak for this, and to pass this. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
3 much, Dr. Galvan, and thank you also for your  
4 testimony at the Cultural Plan Hearing from a couple  
5 of weeks ago. I recognize you, and appreciated very  
6 much your testimony that day as well.

7 DR. MARILU GALVAN: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And I want to  
9 assure you that the committee is very much intending  
10 to pass this resolution and be helpful in this  
11 regard. Dr. Moreno Vega also was amazing at our  
12 Cultural Plan Hearing a couple of weeks ago. Thank  
13 you very much, Marta.

14 DR. MARTA MORENO VEGA: [off mic] All  
15 right. That's wasn't on. I'm sorry. I would like  
16 to just focus on the areas that are different from  
17 what other people have said for the want of time. I  
18 think that it's important that this committee support  
19 the resolution to pass the museum, and that the  
20 President sign the establishment of the Smithsonian  
21 American Latino Museum on the Mall. Because it  
22 becomes part of the complex of institutions that  
23 reflect its stories that have been excluded. More  
24 than exhibitions, more than historical information  
25 because we have institutions on the ground that do

1 this and have done this. And have created the  
2 atmosphere for the discussion of a national museum.  
3 But what it does say is that marginal groups, and  
4 those that have been excluded from the story of this  
5 nation, are being addressed. And how they are to be  
6 addressed is critical because the Latino/Latina  
7 experience represents Asian, Native American,  
8 African, and all of the configurations and  
9 ethnicities and racial configurations and cultures  
10 that make up that Latino experience.  
11

12 We have to make sure that the Smithsonian  
13 in its bureau [sic] centric vision does not tell a  
14 story that excludes the complexity of who we are.  
15 Because even within our own cultures, that complexity  
16 often times doesn't get told. But important to the  
17 story I think is the importance of the community that  
18 is promoting the Latino Museum concept. Understand  
19 that there are institutions on the ground that have  
20 come out of the Civil Rights Movement that are  
21 critical to opening the door for this discussion  
22 nationally. We have to recognize and make sure that  
23 included are the leadership of institutions like the  
24 Mexican Museum in Chicago, and the El Museo del  
25 Barrio, whose director was here. I was the second

3 director, and took it from a public school program  
4 into an independent institution.

5 Obviously, the Caribbean Cultural Center,  
6 which I developed and am the President of, the  
7 Guadalupe Cultural Center in San Antonio. Galleria  
8 De La Raza in San Francisco. There are a  
9 multiplicity of institutions that have created a  
10 national dialogue about the Latino experience. And  
11 Julissa's comment, how do mom and pop and  
12 neighborhood people get involved. They have been  
13 involved because these institutions have addressed  
14 the needs of neighborhoods and communities. But  
15 there is a museum at the Mall that basically says  
16 that this country is coming to grips with this  
17 racism, the discrimination, right? And understand  
18 that there's a broader story than the one that has  
19 been told. So thank you for the opportunity.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
21 much, Marta, as always for your passionate  
22 leadership. I want to invite Deborah to join the  
23 table where Jorge Daniel was, and ask Milagros Baez  
24 O'Toole to speak next and then Deborah will close it  
25 out.

MILAGROS BAEZ O'TOOLE: [off mic]

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We are. Marta,  
3 if you could pass the mic over to her.

4 MILAGROS BAEZ O'TOOLE: Yes, so thank you  
5 very much, and thank you to the members of the  
6 committee. My name is Milagros Baez O'Toole, and I'm  
7 President of Elmhurst Spanish Women and Board Chair  
8 of Acacia Network, and I mention that because I am  
9 presenting, and I'm testifying on their behalf. Each  
10 of them have provided separate testimony. But, you  
11 know, sitting here I really would like to say ditto  
12 to everything that has been said at this table.  
13 Because everything has so legitimately connected to  
14 the reasons that we need to have this museum.

15 So I would like to then just read some  
16 excerpts from our testimony, and they seem hollow to  
17 me after I listened to all these reasons. And it  
18 really moved me from the bottom my heart. So I  
19 almost would like to do this testimony over again.  
20 So on behalf of the Acacia Network, Acacia Network is  
21 the largest grassroots non-profit organization based  
22 in New York. It provides quality services community  
23 and interstate and beyond. And it's proud to support  
24 the establishment of the Smithsonian American Latino  
25 Museum. I think what is very significant. Acacia

2 Network is an organization that works profoundly with  
3 the community. They provide wonderful services to  
4 the community. I'm very proud of it because--

5 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

6 MILAGROS BAEZ O'TOOLE: You don't have  
7 it? I have it in front of me.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think it's  
9 fine. Just go ahead and finish your testimony.

10 MILAGROS BAEZ O'TOOLE: {laughs} You can  
11 read it. [sic] No.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughs] Thank  
13 you. Thank you.

14 MILAGROS BAEZ O'TOOLE: And they're very  
15 powerful and their strength is an asset to the  
16 support of this initiative. I will read you excerpts  
17 from their testimony.

18 The Smithsonian American Latino Museum  
19 and recognizes and reaches Latinos, men and women  
20 through economic, social, cultural, and it is all of  
21 the things that we have heard here today. So I am  
22 very proud to be their representative and be here on  
23 their behalf. And then there are 100 Hispanic Women  
24 and on behalf I will say that the 100 Hispanic Women  
25 is a not-for-profit organization that was established

2 in 1995. I am a proud member of the founding  
3 members, and it's comprised of a group of prominent  
4 professional and prominent also Latina women  
5 committed to educational, professional, economical  
6 progress of Latinas. So our Board of Directors and  
7 2,500 members support the commission on this  
8 initiative. And with that I'll say, ditto, and thank  
9 you very much for this opportunity.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
11 much Ms. Baez O'Toole for your testimony, and our  
12 last speaker today will be Deborah Schwartz from the  
13 Brooklyn Historical Society.

14 DEBORAH SCHWARTZ: Thank you, Chairman  
15 Van Bramer. I am very glad to be here. I'm honored  
16 to be here. I thought I was being very well  
17 organized, and we sent copies of this testimony. So  
18 hopefully, they're here somewhere. [laughs] But it  
19 really pleases me to be here with this Resolution No.  
20 405. As President of the Brooklyn Historical  
21 Society, I am fully aware of the profound  
22 significance of the Latino community in the shaping  
23 of New York historically and in the present. In  
24 Brooklyn alone, according to the most recent U.S.  
25 Census, there are approximately 508,000 Latinos,

2 almost 20% of the entire population of the enormous  
3 borough of Brooklyn.

4           The impact of the Spanish speaking people  
5 of New York goes back to the 1600s. It is no  
6 exaggeration to say that every aspect of this great  
7 city has been impacted by the extraordinary labors  
8 and intellectual contributions of our Latino  
9 communities. Be it in the realm of politics,  
10 culture, economics, commerce, the military and every  
11 aspect of our lives. Our ability to teach history  
12 and tell the amazing stories that collectively make  
13 up the fabric of this country have precious few  
14 venues. I have spent my entire professional career  
15 as a museum educator first at the Brooklyn Museum,  
16 and then as the Deputy Director for Education at the  
17 Museum of Modern Art. Now, as the head of New  
18 York's, one of New York's premier history museums,  
19 the Brooklyn Historical Society, it is with  
20 confidence and authority that I note for the record  
21 that our children's history textbooks change far too  
22 infrequently, the new scholarship rarely finds a  
23 broad audience.

24           Our museums are central places where  
25 history becomes public, where young children are

3 introduced to new ideas and information about the  
4 contributions of diverse people. And where material  
5 evidence is protected, celebrated, and handed down  
6 from one generation to the next. In museums,  
7 exhibitions and programs allow us to revisit well  
8 known stories, and to consider, reconsider our  
9 understanding of who has made history, how, and why.

10           Soon with the opening of the Museum for  
11 African-American History and Cultures, Americans and  
12 everyone who visit our Capitol will better understand  
13 the amazing contributions of Africans and African-  
14 Americans. A Latino museum standing nearby with a  
15 mission to explore the myriad stories of America's  
16 Latino communities will get us one very important  
17 step closer to presenting an inclusive history with  
18 its many faceted participants properly celebrated and  
19 understood.

20           History requires constant refreshing and  
21 revision. For the people of the United States, the  
22 Mall in Washington should be a mirror in which we see  
23 ourselves, all of us, reflected well and truly and  
24 where we can underscore that our strength is in our  
25 diversity of knowledge and perspectives. Thank you

3 for this opportunity to testify in support of this  
4 matter.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, very  
6 much, Deborah. Thank you all of you for raising your  
7 voices once again in support of this very important  
8 resolution. And I think a lot has been said today.  
9 I think it's very clear that this Council under the  
10 leadership of Ms. Mark-Viverito, our Speaker, and  
11 myself as Chair and the Majority Leader share this  
12 view. And I look forward to our next meeting of the  
13 Cultural Affairs Committee where I expect that we  
14 will pass this resolution. And then move to the full  
15 Council for passage from the entire body. So thank  
16 you for lending your voices today. But more than  
17 that particularly because I've seen most, if not all,  
18 of you at previous hearings of this committee for  
19 raising your voice all the time when it comes to the  
20 arts and culture.

21 So with that, I want to thank everyone,  
22 and I think most of the folks from the Friends of the  
23 Museum are departed, but Sid is still with us. And I  
24 don't know who is in charge of his social media, but  
25 the Speaker and I are still trying to figure out how  
you had 172,000 follows on Twitter when you had no

3 one going through your doors, which is a real  
4 accomplishment, and incredibly significant. So thank  
5 you very much for all your work, and I look forward  
6 to having this on. So with that, we are adjourned.

[gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date October 20, 2014