Press Release:

U.S. Senator Dean Heller

**For Immediate Release:** Contact: Stewart Bybee

December 6, 2011 202-224-6244

**Heller Urges Plan for American Latino Museum***Sends Bipartisan Letter Requesting Plan to be Included in Appropriations Measures*

 **(Washington DC) –** Today U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) wrote a letter to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees requesting that they include a plan to create the Smithsonian American Latino Museum in any appropriations measure prepared in coming weeks. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) joined as a co-signer.

“This proposal enjoys bipartisan support among Members who recognize the vibrant Hispanic communities in their states,” Senator Heller states in the letter. “A museum to honor this rich culture would go a long way to educate all Americans about the contributions Hispanic Americans have made throughout our country’s history.”

Heller is one of three Republican co-sponsors of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act (S. 1868). This legislation directs the Smithsonian to prepare a plan for creating the Smithsonian American Latino Museum. It also identifies the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institution as the likely site of the Museum.

This legislation does not commit taxpayer funds to the museum and instead directs the Smithsonian Board of Regents to identify and evaluate viable funding models for construction and operation of the Museum.

**Full text of the letter below**:

December 6, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye                                     The Honorable Harold Rogers

Senate Committee on Appropriations                         House Committee on Appropriations

Room S-128                                                                 Room H-307

The Capitol                                                                  The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20510                                             Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran                                     The Honorable Norman Dicks

Senate Committee on Appropriations                         House Committee on Appropriations

Room S-146A                                                              1016 Longworth House Office Building

The Capitol                                                                  Washington, D.C. 20515

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Inouye and Rogers and Ranking Members Cochran and Dicks,

            We write to respectfully request that you include the provisions of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act (S. 1868/H.R. 3459) in the final appropriations measure to fund the federal government into next year.

As you may be aware, this legislation simply designates the Arts and Industries building as the site for the Smithsonian American Latino Museum, yet does not ask for any federal funding.  This proposal enjoys bipartisan support among Members who recognize the vibrant Hispanic communities in their states.

Enactment of this legislation would provide an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of Hispanic Americans through the Smithsonian Institution, which has played a vital role in educating citizens about the history of our nation for more than 150 years.  Also important to note given the current fiscal climate is the fact that this legislation does not commit taxpayer funds to the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.  This bill directs the Smithsonian Board of Regents to identify and evaluate viable funding models for construction and operation of the Museum.

American Latinos are an important part of the fabric of communities throughout our nation.  A museum to honor this rich culture would go a long way to educate all Americans about the contributions Hispanic Americans have made throughout our country’s history.

As supporters of this measure, we encourage you to include the provisions of the bipartisan, bicameral Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act in the year-end appropriations bill.

                                                                        Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Dean Heller

U.S. Senator Robert Menendez