

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2496

To authorize a national museum, including a research center and related visitor facilities, in the city of El Paso, Texas, to commemorate migration at the United States southern border.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 17, 2003

Mr. REYES introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize a national museum, including a research center and related visitor facilities, in the city of El Paso, Texas, to commemorate migration at the United States southern border.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Paso al Norte National
5 Museum of Immigration History Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1 (1) more than 20,000,000 people currently liv-
2 ing in the United States trace their roots to Mexico,
3 and Mexican-Americans represent one of the fastest
4 growing population groups in this country;

5 (2) people of Hispanic descent have made sig-
6 nificant contributions in all areas of American life;

7 (3) Hispanic-Americans, their ancestors, and
8 other cultural groups on both sides of the border
9 have a rich history that must be preserved and told
10 for the benefit of current and future generations of
11 Americans;

12 (4) the histories of the many individuals and
13 families, who came from many different backgrounds
14 and who faced hardship and adversity as they mi-
15 grated in search of better lives for themselves and
16 their descendants, need to be better documented and
17 incorporated into the larger history of the United
18 States;

19 (5) the histories of these courageous people re-
20 flect the strong relationship between the people of
21 the United States and the people of Mexico;

22 (6) there is no museum dedicated to the history
23 of migration at the United States southern border;

1 (7) historically, El Paso, Texas, has been the
2 largest port of entry for people immigrating to the
3 United States from Mexico;

4 (8) El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (the
5 Royal Road of the Interior) passes through El Paso
6 and served as the primary route between the colonial
7 Spanish capital of Mexico City and the Spanish Pro-
8 vincial capitals San Juan de los Caballeros, San Ga-
9 briel, and Santa Fe, all part of the present day
10 United States;

11 (9) El Paso and its sister city, Ciudad Juarez,
12 Mexico, together form the largest international bor-
13 der city;

14 (10) the University of Texas at El Paso, a ma-
15 jority of whose students are Mexican-American, is
16 coordinating a national effort to create in El Paso
17 a national museum dedicated to preserving the his-
18 tory of people who, for many centuries, have moved
19 between Mexico and territories that are now part of
20 the United States; and

21 (11) the City of El Paso has made the estab-
22 lishment of the Paso al Norte National Museum of
23 Immigration History a priority in an effort to draw
24 large numbers of visitors as part of its plan for revi-
25 talization and development.

1 **SEC. 3. PASO AL NORTE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IMMIGRA-**
2 **TION HISTORY.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—If land is made available to
4 or by the University of Texas at El Paso as described in
5 subsection (b), the Secretary of the Interior shall make
6 a grant under section 4 for the establishment of the Paso
7 al Norte National Museum of Immigration History (re-
8 ferred to in this Act as “the museum”), a museum and
9 research center for the interpretation and commemoration
10 of migration at the United States southern border.

11 (b) LAND.—The land referred to in subsection (a) is
12 land within the boundary of the city of El Paso, Texas,
13 either made available by the University of Texas at El
14 Paso, or, if the university agrees to the location, by the
15 city of El Paso or by any other entity.

16 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT GRANT.**

17 (a) GRANT.—The Secretary of the Interior shall,
18 within 90 days after receiving a proposal meeting the re-
19 quirements of subsection (b), award a grant to the Univer-
20 sity of Texas at El Paso for the establishment of the mu-
21 seum, including planning, design, construction, furnishing,
22 and startup expenses.

23 (b) GRANT PROPOSAL.—In order to receive a grant
24 under this section the University of Texas at El Paso, in
25 agreement with the city of El Paso, shall, not later than
26 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, trans-

1 mit to the Secretary of the Interior a proposal that in-
2 cludes—

3 (1) a designation of land made available for the
4 museum as described in section 3(b);

5 (2) plans detailing the location and function of
6 each museum facility;

7 (3) plans for design and construction that will
8 meet all applicable Federal, State, and local building
9 codes and laws, and that are in accordance with pro-
10 fessional museum standards;

11 (4) a timetable for completion of construction
12 and opening of the museum before October 1, 2007;

13 (5) detailed plans concerning the operation and
14 maintenance of the museum;

15 (6) a description of proposed museum collec-
16 tions and educational programming; and

17 (7) a plan for the design of exhibits, including
18 collections to be exhibited, preservation, protection,
19 environmental controls, security, and presentations
20 in accordance with professional museum standards.

21 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
23 retary of the Interior \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2004,
24 and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
25 2005 through 2008, to carry out this Act. All sums au-

1 thORIZED TO BE APPROPRIATED SHALL REMAIN AVAILABLE FOR EX-
2 PENDITURE THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2008.

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