

## John Leguizamo Lobbies for the Construction of the 'National Latino Museum'



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In the past half-decade, [John Leguizamo](#) has become an increasingly influential voice in Hollywood regarding the lack of representation for Latino performers and Latinx films. His thought-provoking insight was displayed when the Golden Globe-winning actor broached the topic in several ways with a one-man Off-Broadway special called *Latin History for Morons* on Netflix. The live comedic production earned Leguizamo a Tony Award nomination for "Best New Play." Last month, the 62-year-old returned with another made-for-TV special called *Leguizamo Does America*. Unlike his previous theatre-friendly show, *Latin History for Morons*, this series is a sequential documentary that outlines the seriousness of Leguizamo's drive for activism. Days after *Leguizamo Does America* debuted on MSNBC, the actor/comedian attended a yearly event in Washington D.C. called the "Garden Brunch," an occurrence that typically serves as a precursor for the White House Correspondents' Dinner at night. *PEOPLE* magazine caught up with the renowned attendee, who revealed that in addition to rubbing elbows with several A-List celebrities and politicians at the annual event created by Tommy Haddad, he was there to gain support for the construction of the National Museum of the American Latino; a meaningful objective that he has vowed to realize before he passes away someday.

"I'm there to get the Latino museum on the mall, and that's a big thing I want to do before I die, my mission," Leguizamo said. "It's stalled as to the location. We don't want the museum to be miles out of here because it makes us feel like second-class, like it doesn't matter. We need to be on the [National] Mall because we're that important. We've contributed 500 years...We discovered America, built America, suffered in America, and contributed \$2.8 trillion to the economy every year in this country. If we were our own country, it would be the fifth-largest economy in the world. Bigger than Brazil, bigger than Britain. Bigger than Italy. Now what? Now what?"

While in D.C. last Saturday, Leguizamo shared that his efforts to lobby for a National Museum of the American Latino would include a meeting with Sen. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Although a study breaking down the logistics, funding, and legislation needed to construct the museum was created in 2008, the hopeful project remains a concept years away from being built. If the museum comes to fruition someday, the educative displays might include information about the Latinos who helped build Puerto Rico (U.S. territory since the late 1800s) and the original Mexican Territory, which previously consisted of present-day Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming long before the United States of America obtained the region. About twenty-seven years before the United States acquired a large portion of Mexico, the country bought Florida from Spain. As a result, more than 100,000 Spanish-speaking habitants became citizens of the United States of America. Historical facts such as these continue to fuel Leguizamo's passion for educating the public about the many contributions made by his community.