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# CALIFORNIA LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

March 26, 2007

Ms. Paula Kerger  
PBS President and CEO  
Office of Corporate Secretary  
2100 Crystal Drive  
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Ms. Kerger,

The California Latino Legislative Caucus wishes to express our dissatisfaction with PBS' exclusion of Latinos from Ken Burns' forthcoming documentary, *The War*. As longtime supporters of public television, we are disappointed that you have no sensitivity to this issue, given the widespread expression of dismay from the Latino community over this act of discrimination by omission. The exclusion of the Latino community from this critical documentary series is not acceptable.

A major challenge to our work is overcoming negative images of Latinos in the media and in the public discourse. This is particularly challenging with all of the anti-immigrant rhetoric dominating society and being so recklessly and irresponsibly spouted by too many of our political leaders. Mr. Burns' clear blind spot on the Latino experience in this and his previous documentaries only perpetuates the harmful notion that Latinos have made no significant contributions to American society – which couldn't be further from the truth. Ignoring or eliminating their roles during a significant part of American history only feeds the xenophobic attitudes that we are witnessing too often these days.

We support the position of the Defend the Honor Campaign! We want PBS to delay release of the documentary to re-edited it and present a historically accurate account of the war by including the Latino experience in World War II – this would greatly contribute to achieving the universal experience he was trying to document. **LATINOS WERE THERE. THEY FOUGHT AND DIED ALONGSIDE MANY OTHERS DURING THAT WAR.** Anything less, would be unacceptable.

I respectfully suggest that you institute an immediate, comprehensive review of your programming and call on numerous Latino experts in academia, journalism and the civil rights community to ensure that this kind of incident is not repeated in the future.

Sincerely,

Joe Coto  
Chair