

## BACKGROUND

# NMAP BIPARTISAN PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION

## WHAT

The **National Museum of the American People** Bipartisan Presidential Commission we're calling for will include distinguished Americans from both parties. It would produce a report modeled after the one which led to creation of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The Commission's Final Report would explore six elements to help guide creation of the National Museum of the American People:

### **1. Mission and Governance**

Discussing the governance (e.g., becoming part of the Smithsonian Institution or independent of it), creating an entity charged with planning, building and raising funds for the NMAP, developing a mission statement for the NMAP, determining the scope of the institution, its impact on and support of other US ethnic museums, developing a plan to create the museum, and examining issues the museum could encounter.

### **2. The Museum's Permanent Exhibition: *Making of the American People***

Developing an outline of the history for each chapter of the museum's story, exploring how to tell the story, an evaluation of the museum's audiences, topics for special exhibitions, a review of the best museum exhibition designers, and an analysis of other major ethnic and story-telling museums.

### **3. The Museum's Location, Physical Facility and Grounds**

Reviewing and evaluating Washington, DC sites, transportation issues at each site, building and grounds space requirements, a plan to transfer federal land to the museum, obtaining permanent art, a sculpture garden associated with the museum, and a plan to obtain a world-class architect to design the museum building. Many of the site reviews have already been done by the Smithsonian Institution.

### **4. The Cost and Funding for the Museum**

Calculating the cost of designing and constructing the NMAP, the annual operating and maintenance costs, annual budgets, plans to raise funds to design, build and operate the NMAP, issues related to funding operations and museum staffing.

## **5. Museum Components**

Exploring each potential museum component:

- a. Museum collections
- b. Special exhibitions
- c. Traveling exhibitions
- d. Museum book store and gift shop
- e. Museum food venues
- f. Center for the Advanced Study of the American People
- g. National Ancestry Center
- h. Archive and Library of American Immigration and Migration
- i. Education Resource Center
- j. Public programs
- k. American People Film Center
- l. Peopling of America Center

## **6. Public Relations and Legislation**

Drafting legislation to create the NMAP and a plan to pass it, drafting a public relations plan for the museum, and developing ways to communicate regularly with prime constituents including ethnic, nationality and minority organizations.

# WHEN

## **A Proposed Timeline for the Presidential Commission**

### **2023**

The President announces the Presidential Commission and names its chair. The President names members of the commission; the chair names the executive director and appoints staff; preparations begin for first commission meeting.

### **Later in 2023**

Final Report along with legislation to create the NMAP are submitted to the President, Vice President and Congress; legislation to create the NMAP is introduced in Congress.

# WHO

## **Commission Chair, Vice Chair and Members**

We propose consideration of the following to chair the commission, each of whom commands a significant measure of public support:

Former President Barack Obama  
Former President George W. Bush  
First Lady Dr. Jill Biden  
Former First Lady Michelle Obama  
Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff

Historian Jon Meacham would be an excellent choice as vice chair of the commission.

The President, in addition to appointing the chair and vice chair, would appoint other diverse individuals with a variety of backgrounds to provide the broad expertise required to create this vital new institution.

## HOW

### **Presidential Decision**

Our goal is to have the President establish the Commission by Executive Order. The order would outline the scope, membership and mission of the Commission.

An Executive Order and Plan of Action for the NMAP Presidential Commission has been drafted by the NMAP for consideration by the White House.

With the publicity generated by this effort, we anticipate broad support for the Presidential Commission from Americans regardless of when they, or their ancestors, migrated or immigrated to this land or nation; from museum-goers of all stripes; from immigration reform advocates; and from a broad swath of Congress.

## PRECEDENTS

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum began with a Presidential Commission to study the feasibility of that museum. It was initiated by President Carter. Elie Wiesel was appointed to chair the commission. It met its deadline to produce its final report in six months.

The report led to creation of the US Holocaust Memorial Council. It was charged with planning, building the museum and raising *all* of the funds required for that. April 23, 2023 will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this innovative museum which, because of its popularity, still requires timed tickets for its permanent exhibition.