



January 12, 2010

Dear Friends:

I am excited to tell you about a long overdue addition to the grounds of our Texas State Capitol. Last week, the State Preservation Board approved the installation of the Tejano Monument honoring the role Hispanics played in Texas' history.

I am proud to say that many residents from the Rio Grande Valley worked nearly a decade to make this monument a reality. One special person that worked tirelessly was Dr. Cayetano Barrera, who is a true historian. The photo below is of the Tejano Monument's bill signing and Governor Perry is presenting one of the pens he used to sign the bill to Dr. Barrera's granddaughter.

The monument will be located on the south lawn of the Capitol and is expected to be installed in the next two years. The Tejano Monument will be the largest display on the Capitol lawn and will feature sculptures of a *vaquero* on a horse, a Spanish explorer, livestock, and a young family, all designed by Laredo Sculptor Armando Hinojosa.

Spanish and Mexican settlers made many contributions to the framework of Texas' culture and it is fitting we pay them tribute. For instance, it was the Spaniards who introduced the longhorn to North America in 1493. Texas' first cowboys were the Mexican *vaqueros* who wore broad-brimmed hats, chaps and spurs and ran cattle across South Texas in the 1800s. The word "rodeo" is Spanish and the word "buckaroo" which is not used much anymore was created from the Spanish word "vaquero".

I applaud the many private citizens, historians and state officials who diligently worked to include the Tejano Monument alongside other historical markers on the Capitol grounds. It was about time.

Sincerely,

Veronica Gonzales
State Representative District 41