

THE BURNS CONTROVERSY CONTINUES...

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A very important press release issued today, May 11th, by the Defend The Honor Campaign, the organization that alerted the nation and spearheaded the effort to have Ken Burns include Latinos in his 'THE WAR' documentary, appears below:

**<http://defendthehonor.org/>
NEWS RELEASE**

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THE LATINO COMMUNITY REQUESTS DETAILS ON PROPOSED CHANGES IN BURNS' FILM, "THE WAR"

AUSTIN, Texas - This week's announcement that Ken Burns has reached a general "understanding" with two Latino organizations to include the Latino WWII perspective in his upcoming 14-hour documentary may represent a step forward, but, the Defend the Honor Campaign, notes, significant questions remain. The Defend The Honor Campaign has released a letter they sent to Paula Kerger, President and CEO of PBS, requesting sufficient details about the proposed changes to the film to allow the campaign to determine whether these are acceptable or not.

"We will need more details before we are able to report back to our community. What has changed between this week's announcement and what was said three weeks ago," asked Maggie Rivas-Rodríguez, a journalism professor who is a lead organizer of the grassroots network of more than 7,000 individuals and organizations throughout the United States advocating for the inclusion of Latinos in THE WAR.

The Defend the Honor campaign, which initiated this effort for Latino inclusion in the WWII documentary, was not included in the negotiations that led to the May 10 announcement by the Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility (HACR) and the American GI Forum and Florentine Films, Ken Burns' production company.

PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger stated in an April 20 letter that Burns had agreed to "create new content focused on Latino and Native American veterans" and incorporate it seamlessly within the "footprint" of the existing film. Leaders of the campaign requested specific details on how this would be accomplished to gauge how significant a presence Latino veterans would have in the film and how fairly the

subject matter would be treated.

“Dialogue and an 'understanding' between Burns and some Latino groups is a welcome development if it brings us closer to our ultimate goal of incorporating the Latino perspective,” said Rivas-Rodriguez, who also directs the U.S. Latino & Latina World War II Oral History Project at the University of Texas at Austin. This project has videotaped interviews with over 550 men and women across the country, documenting the contributions and unique experiences of various Latino ethnic groups, who often faced segregated public institutions while defending their country.

The Defend the Honor campaign first met with Kerger and PBS officials on March 6, at the PBS headquarters in Arlington, VA. When the PBS response to the campaign was negative, the group enlisted the support of several other organizations. After a series of missteps, PBS and Burns agreed to incorporate Latinos into the WWII documentary on April 17. But in later news stories, Burns appeared to lean away from any substantial changes that would involve changing his documentary.

Details on this week's developments are still vague.

“As we've said before, the devil is in the details,” said Marta Garcia, a New York-based representative of the Defend the Honor campaign, and the Co-Chair of the New York Chapter of the National Hispanic Media Coalition.

A letter from the Defend the Honor to Kerger on Friday, May 11, seeks answers to questions posed then, which Burns and Kerger previously said they needed more time to answer.

THE WAR is scheduled to air beginning September 23, during Hispanic Heritage Month.

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Further information: www.defendthehonor.org

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