ON THE COLLAPSE OF BALTIMORE’S KEY BRIDGE, here are our thoughts: in addition to mourning the loss of life and sending our prayers and love to the families of the victims we lift this painful moment as a reminder that the Latino community is often behind the building and maintenance of our nation’s infrastructure and should be celebrated for their contributions and sacrifice.

While some extremists may want to use the Latino community as a political wedge that depicts all Latinos as a burden and criminal element, the tragedy reminds us all of the reality of our community’s role and daily sacrifice to keep our nation strong. While some extremists may want to use the Latino community as a political wedge that depicts all Latinos as a burden and criminal element, the tragedy reminds us all of the reality of our community’s role and daily sacrifice to keep our nation strong. These men worked in the 9pm to 3am window atop a perilously high bridge to ensure thousands of people are able to get to work each day. Often unseen and ignored, their contribution benefited thousands even as they were overlooked. This is how it often is everywhere around us.

We do not need to look far for other examples of how the Latino community has stepped up in times of urgency and national tragedy. While some extremists may want to use the Latino community as a political wedge that depicts all Latinos as a burden and criminal element, the tragedy reminds us all of the reality of our community’s role and daily sacrifice to keep our nation strong. These men worked in the 9pm to 3am window atop a perilously high bridge to ensure thousands of people are able to get to work each day. Often unseen and ignored, their contribution benefited thousands even as they were overlooked. This is how it often is everywhere around us.

As we pray for the families who lost their loved ones, let us also take a moment to remind others of what these men represented. They embody the truth of the commitment and contributions of Latinos and immigrants to our nation. We must not allow a false narrative to keep poisoning the reality of the gratitude we should have for these men and women. They show up every day, often in the middle of the night, to make sure our buildings, roads, and bridges are as strong as we need so that we can do our jobs, and so our economy keeps moving and growing.

As we learn more over the coming days about this tragedy and the victims, let us also look around at others like them that continue to work around us, often as we are arriving to work or as we leave. To them we should give our thanks and respect in honor of those whose lives were lost.

Adelante!

WITH DEEPEST SYMPATHY,

Estuardo V. Rodriguez, Friends of the National Museum of the American Latino

Marcos Davis, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)

Antonio Tijerino, Hispanic Heritage Foundation

Monica Ramirez, Justice for Migrant Women and The Latinx House

Abel Nunez, Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)

Al Collegio, National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives (NAHFE)

Amy Heneghan, NAHCA: A Latino Organization

Ana Bridges, National Latino Psychological Association (NLPA)

Anna Marie Anglada, Hispanic in Philanthropy

Antonio Flores, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)

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Carmen Perez, The Gathering for Justice

Charlotte Castillo, Podemos

CICRoses, The Latino Coalition

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Felix Sanchez, National Latino Foundation for the Arts (NHFFA)

Frankie Miranda, Hispanic Federation

Hector Sanchez, Mi Familia Vota

Ignacio Salazar, SER Jobs for Progress

Ivette Rodriguez, LA Collab

Janel Mungia, UndocuLUL

John Villegas, ASPIRA

Juan Proctor, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

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Santina Brown and Deborah Santiago, Excellence in Education

Sonja Diaz, UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute

Stephanie Valenzuela, Esperanza

Yadira Sanchez, Poder Latinos

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE TRAGEDY VICTIMS