

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 28, 2024

The Honorable Mark Rutte, Prime Minister
Ministerie van Algemene Zaken
Binnenhof 19
Postbus 20001
2500 EA Den Haag
The Netherlands

Dear Prime Minister Rutte:

We write to seek your support and cooperation to ensure the speedy return of several items of tribal patrimony currently held by the Nationaal Museum Van Wereldculturen in the Netherlands to the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Tribe located near El Paso, Texas. The Pueblo is a federally recognized Indian tribe located within the United States of America. Over the last ten (10) years, the Pueblo has made numerous yet unsuccessful efforts to communicate with the Museum for the repatriation of some of the Pueblo's most sacred religious objects, which were taken from the Pueblo by Dutch anthropologist Herman F.C. Ten Kate in December, 1882. The Pueblo's requests have been denied while the items sought for return sit in a warehouse at the Museum. As such, we would be most grateful for your assistance to facilitate an expeditious homecoming for these items to the Pueblo.

Several of the items removed by Mr. Ten Kate from the Pueblo date back more than 450 years, yet they still could and should play a daily role in the spiritual and cultural life of the Pueblo. The Winter Drum held in the Museum's warehouse, the Pohwith drum, is the Pueblo's most significant religious artifact, along with its brother Summer Drum. Moreover, the Pohwith's absence from the Pueblo has prevented the Pueblo from successfully carrying out its winter dances and religious ceremonies for more than 140 years. For the Pueblo and its people, the Pohwith is a living entity that requires feeding and care that only the Pueblo can provide. Accordingly, we contend, and we hope you agree, that the Pueblo is the best home for the Powith and the other items held by the Museum. A crate in a warehouse at the Museum is not the rightful home for these cherished religious relics. The items held in the museum's warehouse are: a) Item 362-315, Tigua double headed drum and drum stick; b) 362-136. Pueblo drum and drumstick; c) 362-141, Tigua War Shield; d) 362-138/138a, Tigua rattle and incipient rattle; and e) Tigua moccasins/Bernardo Holguin's moccasins.

Since the Pueblo began efforts to repatriate their artifacts in 2014, significant changes have occurred, including new leadership for both the Pueblo and the Museum. We commend the initiatives by museums in the Netherlands and the U.S., supported by their governments, to return cultural items to their rightful homes. Notably, the U.S. Congress recently passed the Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony Act to aid tribes in reclaiming sacred objects. These

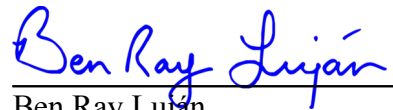
artifacts hold immense value to the Pueblo, who are their rightful stewards. Their return would revive long-interrupted celebrations and rituals, restoring a vital part of the Pueblo's cultural heritage.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you on the successful return of these items of patrimony to the Pueblo.

Sincerely,



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



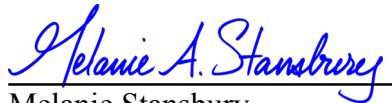
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Anthony Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States

Her Excellency Birgitta Tazelaar, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United States

Her Excellency Shefali Razdan Duggal, United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Honorable Robbert Dijkgraaf, Minister of Education, Culture, and Science Catalogue of Pueblo