

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 14, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to recommend Miami Dade College (MDC) President Dr. Eduardo J. Padron for the Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Dr. Padron's life is the quintessential American success story. He came to the United States at the age of 15 from Cuba without his parents as part of Operation Peter Pan to escape communism. While singlehandedly supporting his younger brother who made the journey with him, Dr. Padron graduated from Miami Senior High School and was accepted to attend college at the very institution he now leads. He went on to receive a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Florida.

Dr. Padron has achieved dramatic success as a leader in education at the local, national, and international levels. He has served as MDC's President since 1995, during which time he has propelled the nation's largest campus-based institution of higher education into national prominence by improving student access, retention, graduation, and achievement. As one of the most recognized community college leaders in the nation, Dr. Padron has consistently advocated on behalf of underserved populations. And he backs up his words with impressive action: MDC enrolls and graduates more minority students than any other institution of higher education in the United States.

During his tenure, MDC has been lauded with numerous awards, including a 2011 Council for Higher Education Accreditation "Award for Outstanding Institutional Practice in Student Learning Outcomes", a 2010 "Higher Education Civic Engagement Award" from The Washington Center, a 2010 College Board "College Keys Compact for Learning Outcomes Initiative" Award, a 2008 Association for General & Liberal Studies "Exemplary Award for Improving General Education", the National Center for Digital Education's award for "Fourth Best College for Digital Transformation" in 2008, and repeated listing from 2008-2011 on the "U.S. President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll."

Dr. Padron's own growing list of awards and honors include being named one of TIME magazine's "10 Best College Presidents" in 2009, and Florida Trend's 2010 "Floridian of the Year". He was also honored as a 2011 Carnegie Corporation Centennial Academic Leadership Award, an Aspen Institute Ascend Fellow, and was awarded with a TIAA-CREF Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence. He has been past-Chair on the board of directors for both the American Council on Education and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and was a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences' Commission on the Humanities & Social Sciences. Dr. Padron has also dutifully served in various posts of national prominence at the invitation of six American presidents over the course of his career.

Once again, we hope that you recognize Dr. Eduardo J. Padron's contributions to higher education in the United States by presenting him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In accordance with all applicable rules and regulations, we ask that you give Dr. Padron's nomination full and fair consideration as you make your selections for 2015.

Sincerely,



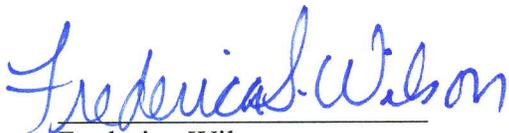
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



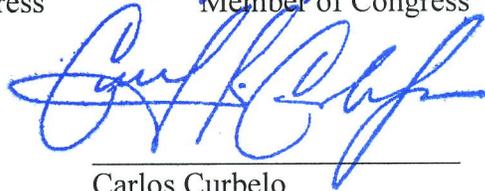
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress