



HOUSE RESOLUTION 14-1005

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Garcia, Becker, Buck, Buckner, Conti, Coram, Court, DelGrosso, Dore, Duran, Everett, Exum, Fields, Fischer, Foote, Gardner, Gerou, Ginal, Hamner, Holbert, Hullinghorst, Humphrey, Joshi, Kagan, Kraft-Tharp, Labuda, Landgraf, Lawrence, Lebsock, Lee, May, McCann, McLachlan, McNulty, Melton, Mitsch Bush, Moreno, Murray, Navarro, Nordberg, Pabon, Peniston, Pettersen, Primavera, Priola, Rankin, Rosenthal, Ryden, Saine, Salazar, Schafer, Scott, Singer, Sonnenberg, Stephens, Swalm, Szabo, Tyler, Vigil, Waller, Williams, Wilson, Wright, Young, Ferrandino.

CONCERNING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LUDLOW MASSACRE IN SOUTHERN COLORADO.

WHEREAS, In the early 1900s, mining was dangerous and difficult work, and Colorado coal miners were at constant risk of explosions, suffocation, and collapsing mine walls; and

WHEREAS, Many coal miners lived in company housing in company-owned towns, in which all land, real estate, stores, and amenities were owned by the mine operator and were expressly designed to instill loyalty and quash any dissent among workers; and

WHEREAS, While company towns brought some improvements to workers' lives, including larger homes, better medical care, and broader access to education, ownership of the towns afforded the mine operators a great deal of control over all aspects of the workers' lives by imposing curfews, employing armed company guards who did not permit the miners to leave, and evicting anyone who expressed dissatisfaction with the company; and

WHEREAS, In 1900, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) began organizing coal miners in the western states, including Colorado, and despite attempts by mine owners to suppress union activity, secret organizing continued in the years leading up to 1913 when the union demanded, on behalf of the miners, safer working conditions and fair wages; and

WHEREAS, After the major coal companies, led by Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I), rejected the UMWA's demands in September 1913, the UMWA went on strike, and the mining companies promptly evicted the miners from their company homes; and

WHEREAS, After being evicted, the miners and their families moved into tent villages prepared by the UMWA, where they lived throughout the harsh winter of 1913-14; and

WHEREAS, Confrontations frequently occurred between striking miners and working miners, sometimes resulting in deaths; and

WHEREAS, CF&I hired the Baldwin-Felts detective agency, a notorious aggressive strike breaker, to protect new workers and harass the strikers; and

WHEREAS, Baldwin-Felts adopted the practice of randomly shooting into tents, patrolling the village's perimeter, and spraying bullets from an armored car mounted with a machine gun known as the "Death Special"; and

WHEREAS, This tactic drove the strikers to dig pits beneath their tents to better protect their families; and

WHEREAS, On April 20, 1914, at 10 a.m., the local militia, who supported the mine operators, surrounded the tent colony and began firing bullets into the tents; and

WHEREAS, The bombardment continued for hours, during which the militia also poured kerosene on the tents, setting them ablaze, and pillaged the area; and

WHEREAS, By 7 p.m., the camp was destroyed; and

WHEREAS, During the course of the melee, 4 women and 11 children huddled together in the pits beneath their tents to avoid being shot; the militia captured camp leader Louis Tikas and two other men; and many miners and their families escaped to an outcrop of hills when a passing freight train stopped to provide them cover from the militia's machine guns; and

WHEREAS, Later, two of the women and all 11 children who had huddled in their tents were found dead, having suffocated after their tent was set on fire; Louis Tikas and the other two captured men were found fatally shot, their bodies left along the railroad tracks in full view of passing trains; and three company guards and one militiaman were killed in the fighting; and

WHEREAS, This criminal episode, now known as the "Ludlow Massacre", triggered national shame and outrage and provided extra urgency to the movement for labor relations reform, which eventually resulted in passage of the National Labor Relations Act; and

WHEREAS, The Ludlow tent colony site was designated a National Historic Landmark on January 16, 2009, and a granite monument has been erected at the site in memory of the miners and their families who died that day; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-ninth General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

(1) That we, the members of the Colorado House of Representatives:

(a) Commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Ludlow Massacre and convey our sympathies to the families of the men, women, and children who lost their lives on that fateful day;

(b) Recognize the tragic events of the Ludlow Massacre as a pivotal event in American history; and

(c) Remember the people who died on that day, including: Elvira Valdez, 3 months; Frank Petrucci, 6 months; Lucy Petrucci, 2 years; Lucy Costa, 4 years; Cloriva Pedregone, 4 years; Joe Petrucci, 4 years; Onafrio Costa, 6 years; Rodgerlo Pedregone, 6 years; Mary Valdez, 7 years; Eulala Valdez, 8 years; Rudolfo Valdez, 9 years; Frank Snyder, 11 years; Primo Larese, 18 years; Frank Rubino, 23 years; Fedelina Costa, 27 years; Louis Tikas, 30 years; Private Alfred Martin, 30 years; Charlie Costa, 31 years; Patria Valdez, 37 years; James Fyler, 43 years; and John Bartolotti, 45 years.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Resolution be sent to Dawn DiPrince and Fawn-Amber Montoya, co-chairs of the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission.

Marilyn Eddins
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mark Ferrandino
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES