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HOUSE MEMORIAL 25

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2016

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

DECLARING JANUARY 27, 2016 "VICTIMS OF HOMELESSNESS MEMORIAL DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, New Mexico agencies aiding the homeless estimate that thousands of New Mexicans are homeless for at least part of the year and even more find themselves at risk of becoming homeless; and

WHEREAS, people who experience homelessness in New Mexico include families and single mothers with children, people who are working at low-wage jobs and people looking for work, people suffering from mental illness and substance abuse problems, migrant workers, runaway or throwaway teens, victims of domestic violence and veterans; and

WHEREAS, a number of New Mexico's homeless residents are veterans; and

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1 WHEREAS, a high percentage of homeless people have a
2 severe or disabling mental illness; and

3 WHEREAS, thousands of New Mexico public school students
4 were homeless during the 2014-2015 school year; and

5 WHEREAS, homelessness greatly impacts an individual's life
6 expectancy and quality of life; and

7 WHEREAS, various studies have shown that, on average, a
8 homeless person's life span is thirty-six percent shorter than
9 the life span of a housed person, and the average age at death
10 of a homeless individual is less than fifty years old; and

11 WHEREAS, in 2015, seventy-two people in Albuquerque and
12 twenty-four people in Santa Fe passed away who were homeless or
13 who had experienced homelessness in the past; and

14 WHEREAS, the condition of homelessness exacerbates
15 existing health problems and causes new ones; and

16 WHEREAS, chronic diseases, such as hypertension, asthma,
17 diabetes, mental health problems and other ongoing conditions,
18 are difficult to manage and may worsen under the stressful
19 circumstances of homelessness and acute problems, such as
20 infections, injuries and pneumonia, are difficult to heal when
21 there is no place to rest and recuperate; and

22 WHEREAS, homelessness further brings increased risk of
23 communicable disease due to crowded or unstable living
24 conditions and the lack of privacy or security; and

25 WHEREAS, medications to manage health conditions are

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1 often difficult to obtain, stolen, lost or compromised due to
2 exposure to the elements; and

3 WHEREAS, people living without homes are more vulnerable
4 to violence, and between 1999 and 2012, the national coalition
5 for the homeless documented one thousand three hundred twenty-
6 eight acts of violence against homeless individuals by housed
7 perpetrators motivated by the perpetrators' bias against
8 homeless individuals or their ability to target homeless people
9 with relative ease; and

10 WHEREAS, the tragedy of homelessness in New Mexico can be
11 lessened by investing in proven solutions, such as rescue
12 missions and shelters, permanent supportive housing for some
13 individuals and rapid rehousing for others, as well as the
14 provision of rental assistance and supportive services to help
15 people stay housed; and

16 WHEREAS, a university of New Mexico study has shown that
17 the overall cost to society of housing a disabled homeless
18 person is significantly less than the cost of leaving them
19 homeless; and

20 WHEREAS, in 1990, December 21, the longest night of the
21 year, was declared national homeless persons' memorial day in
22 memoriam to those who have perished while homeless; and

23 WHEREAS, on December 18, 2015, members of the homeless
24 community, local advocates and other members of the local
25 community marched in downtown Albuquerque and held a vigil to

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1 honor the lives of those who have experienced homelessness and
2 to remember those who have passed away in the community during
3 the year;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that January 27,
6 2016 be declared "Victims of Homelessness Memorial Day" in the
7 house of representatives in memoriam of those who have passed
8 while suffering homelessness; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that recognition be extended to
10 the homeless shelters, homeless health care clinics, homeless
11 housing programs and other homeless service providers that
12 assist homeless people every day; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
14 transmitted to the New Mexico coalition to end homelessness,
15 joy junction, the Albuquerque rescue mission, health care for
16 the homeless, the rock at noon day, St. Elizabeth shelter,
17 crossroads for women, the life link, the Otero hunger
18 coalition, youth shelters, Samaritan house, El Camino Real
19 housing authority, independent living resource center, heading
20 home, CLNkids, Albuquerque affordable housing coalition, new
21 life homes, Barrett foundation, New Mexico veterans integration
22 center, New Mexico crisis and access line and the amity
23 foundation.