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SENATE MEMORIAL 63

51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2014

INTRODUCED BY

Lisa A. Torracco

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE TRAGEDY OF THE 1980 PRISON RIOT AT THE
PENITENTIARY OF NEW MEXICO, THE INMATES WHOSE LIVES WERE LOST
AND THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS WHO WERE HELD HOSTAGE AND
EXPRESSING THE SENATE'S COMMITMENT TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM
THAT RESULTS IN GREATER PUBLIC SAFETY.

WHEREAS, from February 2 to February 4, 1980, the
penitentiary of New Mexico was the site of what remains one of
the most savage and deadly prison riots in this nation's
history; and

WHEREAS, a combination of overcrowding, lack of programs,
poor living conditions and unsatisfactory food led to the riot
and the ensuing thirty-six-hour siege of the prison; and

WHEREAS, during those horrific hours, thirty-three inmates
were killed and at least ninety were seriously injured by

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1 fellow inmates, and fourteen corrections officers were held
2 hostage, assaulted or injured by rioting inmates; and

3 WHEREAS, in the three decades since the 1980 New Mexico
4 prison riot, the corrections department, under the current
5 leadership of Secretary of Corrections Gregg Marcantel, has
6 worked to ensure that the combination of conditions that led to
7 the riot is never created again and that inmates are provided
8 with the proper balance of social control and support and given
9 the best opportunity possible to successfully integrate into
10 society, not re-offend and become contributing taxpayers rather
11 than tax liabilities; and

12 WHEREAS, the legislature recognizes that a properly
13 functioning corrections system is one that safely and humanely
14 incarcerates those persons who must be separated from society
15 and educates, trains and supports the overwhelming number of
16 inmates who will return to society; and

17 WHEREAS, in recognition that inmates are people, that the
18 state bears the ultimate responsibility for their safety while
19 in custody and that the primary purpose of incarceration must
20 be to rehabilitate rather than to punish, the names of the
21 inmates who were killed in the 1980 riot are hereby recognized:
22 Michael Briones, age twenty-two; Lawrence Cardon, age twenty-
23 four; Nick Coca, age thirty; Richard Fierro, age twenty-six;
24 James Foley, age nineteen; Donald Gossens, age twenty-three;
25 Phillip Hernandez, age thirty; Valentino Jaramillo, age thirty-

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1 five; Kelly Johnson, age twenty-six; Steven Lucero, age twenty-
2 five; Joe Madrid, age thirty-eight; Ramon Madrid, age forty;
3 Archie Martinez, age twenty-five; Joseph Mirabal, age twenty-
4 four; Ben Moreno, age twenty; Gilbert Moreno, age twenty-five;
5 Thomas O'Meara, age twenty-five; Filiberto Ortega, age twenty-
6 five; Frank Ortega, age twenty; Paulina Paul, age thirty-six;
7 James Perrin, age thirty-four; Robert Quintela, age twenty-
8 nine; Robert Rivera, age twenty-eight; Vincent Romero, age
9 thirty-four; Herman Russell, age twenty-six; Juan Sanchez, age
10 twenty-two; Frankie Sedillo, age thirty-one; Larry Smith, age
11 thirty-one; Leo Tenorio, age twenty-five; Thomas Tenorio, age
12 twenty-eight; Mario Urioste, age twenty-eight; Danny Waller,
13 age twenty-six; and Russell Werner, age twenty-two; and

14 WHEREAS, in recognition that corrections officers are
15 among the bravest, most dedicated public servants and face some
16 of the most difficult working conditions, the names of the
17 corrections officers who were taken hostage during the 1980
18 prison riot while in service to the people of New Mexico are
19 hereby recognized: Captain Greg Roybal, Lieutenant Jose Anaya,
20 Medical Technician Ross Maez and Corrections Officers Victor
21 Gallegos, Elton Curry, Juan Bustos, Michael Hernandez, Ronnie
22 Martinez, Michael Schmitt, Valentin Martinez, Antonio Vigil,
23 Larry Mendoza, Edward Ortega and Ramon Gutierrez; and

24 WHEREAS, the corrections department's commitment to
25 ensuring that the conditions that led to the riot never exist

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1 again is an integral part of the corrections department's
2 philosophy, particularly under the leadership of Secretary
3 Marcantel, and has manifested itself in everything from the
4 continuing revitalization of the prison building, "Old Main",
5 to support for meaningful inmate programming; and

6 WHEREAS, the legislature's commitment has manifested
7 itself in support for broad and innovative reforms of the
8 criminal justice system through the creation of the criminal
9 justice reform subcommittee;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
11 OF NEW MEXICO that the tragedy of the 1980 prison riot at the
12 penitentiary of New Mexico and the men who were killed, injured
13 and taken hostage during the riot not be forgotten; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the corrections department's
15 commitment to increasing public safety through lower recidivism
16 rates and improved rehabilitation of inmates be commended; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate express its support
18 for meaningful criminal justice reform that results in
19 increased public safety and tax savings; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that continued awareness of the
21 1980 prison riot and the events leading up to it serve to
22 strengthen the commitment of government leaders to advocate for
23 the fundamental rights and dignity of all, including crime
24 victims, correctional professionals and each inmate assigned to
25 the responsibility of the state; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor and the corrections department.