

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE TRAGEDY OF THE 1980 PRISON RIOT AT THE PENITENTIARY OF NEW MEXICO, ACKNOWLEDGING BOTH THE INMATES WHOSE LIVES WERE LOST AND THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS WHO WERE HELD HOSTAGE AND EXPRESSING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' COMMITMENT TO 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 fellow inmates, and fourteen corrections officers were held hostage, assaulted or injured by rioting inmates; and

WHEREAS, the corrections department since that time and under the current leadership of Secretary of Corrections Gregg Marcantel has worked to ensure that the combination of conditions that led to the riot is never created again and that inmates are provided with the proper balance of social control and support and given the best opportunity possible to

successfully integrate into society, not re-offend and become contributing taxpayers rather than tax liabilities; and

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

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

WHEREAS, the corrections department's commitment to ensuring that the conditions that led to the riot never exist again is an integral part of the corrections department's philosophy, particularly under the leadership of Secretary Marcantel, and has manifested itself in everything from the continuing revitalization of the prison building, "Old Main", to support for meaningful inmate programming; and

WHEREAS, the corrections department recognizes the

thirty-fifth anniversary of the prison riot and commits to respecting the past to create a better future by using this tragedy to educate, inform and involve the public in the importance of prison accountability, programming and public safety;

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives express its support for increased public safety; and

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

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