

1 A MEMORIAL

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

4  
5 WHEREAS, New Mexico agencies aiding the homeless  
6 estimate that thousands of New Mexicans are homeless for at  
7 least part of the year and even more find themselves at risk  
8 of becoming homeless; and

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

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

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

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

21 WHEREAS, homelessness greatly impacts an individual's  
22 life expectancy and quality of life; and

23 WHEREAS, various studies have shown that, on average, a  
24 homeless person's life span is thirty-six percent shorter  
25 than the life span of a housed person, and the average age at

1 death of a homeless individual is less than fifty years old;  
2 and

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

6 WHEREAS, the condition of homelessness exacerbates  
7 existing health problems and causes new ones; and

8 WHEREAS, chronic diseases, such as hypertension,  
9 asthma, diabetes, mental health problems and other ongoing  
10 conditions, are difficult to manage and may worsen under the  
11 stressful circumstances of homelessness and acute problems,  
12 such as infections, injuries and pneumonia, are difficult to  
13 heal when there is no place to rest and recuperate; and

14 WHEREAS, homelessness further brings increased risk of  
15 communicable disease due to crowded or unstable living  
16 conditions and the lack of privacy or security; and

17 WHEREAS, medications to manage health conditions are  
18 often difficult to obtain, stolen, lost or compromised due to  
19 exposure to the elements; and

20 WHEREAS, people living without homes are more  
21 vulnerable to violence, and between 1999 and 2012, the  
22 national coalition for the homeless documented one thousand  
23 three hundred twenty-eight acts of violence against homeless  
24 individuals by housed perpetrators motivated by the  
25 perpetrators' bias against homeless individuals or their

1 ability to target homeless people with relative ease; and

2 WHEREAS, the tragedy of homelessness in New Mexico can  
3 be lessened by investing in proven solutions, such as rescue  
4 missions and shelters, permanent supportive housing for some  
5 individuals and rapid rehousing for others, as well as the  
6 provision of rental assistance and supportive services to  
7 help people stay housed; and

8 WHEREAS, a university of New Mexico study has shown  
9 that the overall cost to society of housing a disabled  
10 homeless person is significantly less than the cost of  
11 leaving them homeless; and

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

15 WHEREAS, on December 18, 2015, members of the homeless  
16 community, local advocates and other members of the local  
17 community marched in downtown Albuquerque and held a vigil to  
18 honor the lives of those who have experienced homelessness  
19 and to remember those who have passed away in the community  
20 during the year;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
22 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that January 27,  
23 2016 be declared "Victims of Homelessness Memorial Day" in  
24 the house of representatives in memoriam of those who have  
25 passed while suffering homelessness; and

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that recognition be extended to  
2 the homeless shelters, homeless health care clinics, homeless  
3 housing programs and other homeless service providers that  
4 assist homeless people every day; and

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

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