

1 A MEMORIAL

2 DECLARING FEBRUARY 18, 2017 "SILVER CITY TERRITORIAL CHARTER  
3 DAY" IN THE SENATE.

4  
5 WHEREAS, on February 15, 1878, Governor Samuel Axtell  
6 signed the town of Silver City territorial charter; and

7 WHEREAS, this is the one-hundred-thirty-ninth  
8 anniversary of the charter signing; and

9 WHEREAS, Silver City is the oldest continuously  
10 incorporated municipality in New Mexico; and

11 WHEREAS, Grant county was formed in 1868 from the  
12 western portion of Dona Ana county; and

13 WHEREAS, after silver was discovered in 1870, the town  
14 site was laid out, and the name for the fledgling community  
15 was selected; and

16 WHEREAS, in 1871, Silver City was designated as the  
17 Grant county seat and consisted of two hundred eighty-four  
18 dwellings, five smelting furnaces, two hotels, two printing  
19 offices, a livery stable, a jewelry shop, a watchmaker's  
20 shop, two shoemakers, six quartz mills, ten retail shops,  
21 three bakeries, three meat markets, a brewery, four carpenter  
22 shops, two blacksmiths, a lumber yard and a brickyard; and

23 WHEREAS, in 1872, community leaders proposed a bill to  
24 the territorial legislature to authorize the incorporation of  
25 Silver City, but the bill failed to pass and a feeling of

1 unrest began to grow in the community; and

2 WHEREAS, community leaders felt that the needs of Silver  
3 City were not being recognized by the territorial  
4 legislature; and

5 WHEREAS, to make matters worse, the territory's  
6 Republican administration had reduced the number of  
7 legislative representatives to the territorial government  
8 from four to two; and

9 WHEREAS, Silver City leaders were feeling  
10 disenfranchised, and the seeds for a secession movement were  
11 sown; and

12 WHEREAS, led by residents of Silver City who had a  
13 growing disenchantment with New Mexico, Grant county  
14 petitioned the federal government to become a part of the  
15 Arizona territory; and

16 WHEREAS, Silver City leaders felt that Grant county was  
17 more economically, politically and culturally aligned with  
18 Arizona than with New Mexico; and

19 WHEREAS, Grant county waited until 1876, the one  
20 hundredth anniversary of the founding of the United States,  
21 to propose legislation that would allow Grant county to  
22 secede from New Mexico; and

23 WHEREAS, the Arizona territorial representative  
24 introduced a bill, but it died in committee and was never  
25 acted on; and

1           WHEREAS, after the failure of secession efforts, Silver  
2 City leaders regrouped and obtained a sponsor for a bill  
3 authorizing a territorial charter for Silver City that was  
4 introduced to the New Mexico legislature on January 31, 1878;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, the bill passed unanimously and was signed into  
7 law on February 15, 1878; and

8           WHEREAS, with the newly granted and hard-won territorial  
9 charter, Silver City residents could elect city officials and  
10 participate in self-governance; and

11           WHEREAS, the charter allowed for taxes to be collected  
12 and used for public improvements, such as streets and  
13 sidewalks, and to provide for public safety; and

14           WHEREAS, obtaining the territorial charter allowed the  
15 fledgling community to achieve even greater growth and  
16 prosperity;

17           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
18 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 18, 2017 be declared  
19 "Silver City Territorial Charter Day" in the senate; and

20           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
21 transmitted to the mayor of Silver City. \_\_\_\_\_

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