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A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 10, 2023 "AFRICAN-AMERICAN DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, African-American day is a celebration of the achievements and contributions of African Americans to the history of both New Mexico and the United States; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico recognizes the importance of honoring African Americans, having enacted Section 12-5-12 NMSA 1978, which states, "The second Friday of February of each year shall be set apart and be known as "African-American day"; and

WHEREAS, African-American day is a celebration of the many sacrifices that African Americans have made toward the democracy everyone enjoys today; and

WHEREAS, African-American day shall be observed by the people of New Mexico in recognition of those efforts; and

WHEREAS, African-American day is celebrated in tandem with Black history month; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of African-American day is also a time for people to reflect upon the need to diversify thinking and strategic planning to ensure that all voices are heard in decisions that affect New Mexico and New Mexicans; and

WHEREAS, African-American day provides an opportunity to

1 honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black
2 Americans in every area of endeavor throughout history; and

3 WHEREAS, Black history month should not be treated as
4 though it is separate from the collective American history or
5 as though Black history month is merely a compilation of
6 greatest hits, ranging from the March on Washington to some
7 of the most memorable court cases inspired by African
8 Americans' experiences, but rather as a day that is focused
9 on the shared experiences of all African Americans commingled
10 into a recipe that everyone can appreciate; and

11 WHEREAS, the African American community in New Mexico
12 has a compelling legacy that dates back to 1539, when
13 Esteban, a Spanish Moor from North Africa, traveled to New
14 Mexico seeking gold; and

15 WHEREAS, after the civil war, from three thousand three
16 hundred to three thousand eight hundred African American
17 soldiers, proudly known as the buffalo soldiers, a term given
18 to the troops by Native Americans, were garrisoned at eleven
19 different forts throughout the territory of New Mexico; and

20 WHEREAS, today, New Mexico has a vibrant African
21 American community with a population of approximately forty-
22 four thousand people of African descent, according to the
23 United States census bureau; and

24 WHEREAS, African Americans continue to face police
25 violence, systemic racism and disproportionate health

1 outcomes; and

2 WHEREAS, efforts to advance racial equality and civil
3 engagement continue to be urgent priorities; and

4 WHEREAS, the great contributions that African Americans
5 have made to both the history of New Mexico and the history
6 of the United States should be celebrated and acknowledged
7 while also recognizing that the fight for racial justice and
8 equality continues everyday;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
10 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 10,
11 2023 be designated "African-American Day" in the house of
12 representatives; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
14 transmitted to the governor, the executive director of the
15 New Mexico office on African American affairs, the board
16 chair of the African American museum and cultural center of
17 New Mexico and the president of the national association for
18 the advancement of colored people-New Mexico. _____

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