

1 A MEMORIAL

2 DECLARING FEBRUARY 17, 2025 "VIOLA FLOREZ TIGHE DAY" IN THE
3 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

4
5 WHEREAS, Viola Florez Tighe, the former secretary of
6 higher education and a titan in the field of education in New
7 Mexico, died in Albuquerque on January 21, 2025; and

8 WHEREAS, Vi was born in Bloomfield on July 30, 1947, one
9 of twelve children born to Jose Merced Florez and Florence
10 Hancock Florez; and

11 WHEREAS, Vi received a bachelor's degree from Fort Lewis
12 college and went on to receive a master's degree in education
13 from the university of Colorado; and

14 WHEREAS, after several years of teaching in elementary
15 and middle schools, Vi received a doctor of education in
16 curriculum and instruction from Texas A and M university-
17 Kingsville; and

18 WHEREAS, Vi joined the faculty of Texas A and M
19 university, where she received the outstanding new faculty
20 award in 1985 and the distinguished teaching award in 1987;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, after serving as interim dean and acting vice
23 president of Texas A and M university, Vi returned to New
24 Mexico in 1997 to teach at the university of New Mexico; and

25 WHEREAS, at the university of New Mexico, she was the

1 dean of the college of education from 1997 until 2008, served
2 twice as provost, held the PNM endowed chair in 2009 and was
3 named dean emerita in 2019; and

4 WHEREAS, in 2008, Vi was appointed secretary of higher
5 education by Governor Bill Richardson and served until 2010;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Vi was a mentor and advocate for countless
8 students, faculty and employees of the university of New
9 Mexico and served as the first Latina provost in the state;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Vi served as a member of the board of directors
12 of the university of New Mexico retiree association and
13 chaired its legislative committee, securing the rights of all
14 to pension and retirement benefits; and

15 WHEREAS, Vi was a member of the Hispanic women's council
16 from 2006 until 2021, serving as president in 2014 and
17 receiving the las primeras award in 2008 and the estrella
18 brillante award in 2015; and

19 WHEREAS, Vi received numerous awards during her storied
20 career, including the university of New Mexico alumni lobo
21 award in 2007 and the New Mexico distinguished public service
22 award in 2008; and

23 WHEREAS, Vi held a lifelong passion for education, and
24 her contributions to the field, including numerous
25 publications, have left a lasting legacy throughout the

1 state; and

2 WHEREAS, Vi enjoyed gardening and spending time with her
3 grandchildren; and

4 WHEREAS, Vi was preceded in death by her father, Jose
5 Merced Florez, and her brother, Reverend Marc Florez; and

6 WHEREAS, Vi is survived by her husband of forty-four
7 years, Girard Tighe; her children, Kathryn Ramsey and
8 partner, Matthew, and Joseph Tighe and partner, Veronica; her
9 mother, Florence Florez; her grandchildren, Dominic, Cecilia,
10 Michael and Nicholas; and her siblings, Steve Florez and
11 partner, Dolores, Louella Florez Evans and partner, Jesse,
12 Frank Florez and partner, Gloria, Katrina Florez Fitt and
13 partner, Jeff, Bill Florez and partner, Abby, Kenneth Florez
14 and partner, Joanna, Corine Florez, Susan Florez Chavez and
15 partner, Ken, Robert Florez and partner, Charrise, and Carmen
16 Florez Mansi and partner, Tom;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
18 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 17,
19 2025 be declared "Viola Florez Tighe Day" in recognition of
20 her distinguished career and innumerable contributions to
21 higher education in New Mexico; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
23 transmitted to Kathryn Ramsey and the board of regents of the
24 university of New Mexico. _____