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HOUSE MEMORIAL 17

**57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025**

INTRODUCED BY

D. Wonda Johnson and Joseph Franklin Hernandez  
and Charlotte Little and Derrick J. Lente

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 7, 2025 "AMERICAN INDIAN DAY" IN THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is home to twenty-three sovereign  
Native American nations, tribes and pueblos, whose people are  
citizens of both New Mexico and their sovereign nations, tribes  
and pueblos; and

WHEREAS, decades ago, the state of New Mexico in its  
wisdom set apart a day each year, to be known as "American  
Indian Day", in recognition of the many contributions of Native  
Americans to the economic and cultural heritage of all citizens  
of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the legislature takes great care to recognize and  
support the immeasurable contributions that Native American  
people have made to make New Mexico great; and

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1           WHEREAS, the federal Indian Citizenship Act, which  
2 extended United States citizenship to all Native Americans born  
3 within the United States and its territories, was signed into  
4 law in 1924 but did not include the right to vote; and

5           WHEREAS, Miguel Trujillo, born in Pueblo of Isleta in  
6 1904, enlisted in the United States marine corps after the  
7 attack on Pearl Harbor and recruited Native Americans to join  
8 the military, including some who later became Navajo code  
9 talkers. Trujillo felt that as a citizen and a veteran, he had  
10 a right to vote, but his attempt to register to vote in 1948  
11 was denied. He brought a court case and won, guaranteeing all  
12 Native Americans in New Mexico the right to vote; and

13           WHEREAS, in 1942, the United States marine corps recruited  
14 the first twenty-nine Navajo code talkers, who spoke both  
15 Navajo and English and helped devise a code that more than four  
16 hundred Navajo code talkers eventually used and Japanese  
17 linguists never decoded. At the end of World War II, the code  
18 talkers were sworn to secrecy about their work, and the secret  
19 program was not revealed to the public until 1969. In 1982,  
20 August 14 was declared "national Navajo code talkers day"; and

21           WHEREAS, the first Native Americans to serve in the New  
22 Mexico legislature both began and served in the same years,  
23 1965 and 1966: Representative James Atcitty, who served San  
24 Juan county, and Representative Monroe Jymm, who served  
25 McKinley county. The first Native American woman to serve in

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1 the New Mexico legislature was Lynda M. Lovejoy, who served in  
2 house district 69 from 1989 to 1998 and senate district 22 from  
3 2007 to 2012 and was the first Native American woman senator  
4 and the first Native American to serve in both chambers of the  
5 legislature; and

6 WHEREAS, the current list of New Mexico Native American  
7 legislators includes: Representative D. Wonda Johnson, house  
8 district 5, Navajo; Representative Derrick J. Lente, house  
9 district 65, Pueblo of Isleta and Pueblo of Sandia;  
10 Representative Charlotte Little, house district 68, Pueblo of  
11 San Felipe; Representative Patricia Roybal Caballero, house  
12 district 13, Piro-Manso-Tiwa, Pueblo of Guadalupe;  
13 Representative Michelle Paulene Abeyta, house district 69,  
14 Navajo; Representative Joseph Franklin Hernandez, house  
15 district 4, Navajo; Senator Benny Shendo, Jr., senate district  
16 22, Pueblo of Jemez; Senator Shannon D. Pinto, senate district  
17 3, Navajo; and Senator Angel M. Charley, senate district 30,  
18 Pueblo of Laguna and Navajo; and

19 WHEREAS, contemporary life in New Mexico is deeply  
20 enriched by the cultural, artistic, economic, social, religious  
21 and political aspects of its Native American people and  
22 communities; and

23 WHEREAS, Native Americans are the original inhabitants of  
24 this state and have overcome great devastation and misfortune;  
25 and

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WHEREAS, the experiences of Native Americans in New Mexico provide substantial enrichment to the state and are worthy of great esteem;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 7, 2025 be declared "American Indian Day" in the house of representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor and the secretary of Indian affairs.