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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 54

45TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2001

INTRODUCED BY

Patsy G. Trujillo

A JOINT MEMORIAL

**COMMITTING THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO THE LONG-RANGE STUDY OF
ELECTION REFORM AND ENCOURAGING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PLACE
MORE EMPHASIS ON ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION.**

**WHEREAS, the November 7, 2000 presidential election was
one of the most unusual and controversial elections in our
nation's history and, because of the narrow margin of victory,
it received nationwide scrutiny for any irregularity; and**

**WHEREAS, the problems in the New Mexico 2000 presidential
election are being resolved by the Bernalillo county elections
task force and the office of the secretary of state, and
otherwise this election, with the largest ever number of
voters turning out, ran very successfully due to the hard work
of New Mexico's thirty-three county clerks; and**

WHEREAS, the problems in the Florida 2000 presidential

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1 election should serve as an example to us in New Mexico on how
2 not to run an election. The elimination of the secretary of
3 state as an independent chief elections officer, and the
4 reliance on appointed elections officers in all sixty-seven
5 counties of Florida in the end did not save costs or simplify
6 procedures, and instead led to sixty-seven different standards
7 for how to conduct an election and how to count the votes.
8 The appointed election officials were, in fact, under more
9 local political pressure than the elected county clerks they
10 replaced. Without a centralized office to write procedures,
11 set standards and test voting machines, elections could not be
12 administered fairly, impartially or accurately; and

13 WHEREAS, the legislature is committed to the strict
14 enforcement and extension of the federal Voting Rights Act.
15 As the vote in Florida, Tennessee and many other states
16 demonstrated, the intimidation and disenfranchisement of
17 communities of color still goes on. The federal justice
18 department must strengthen its vote enforcement division to
19 swiftly investigate and prosecute those who act in this way.
20 The Voting Rights Act, some provisions of which are scheduled
21 to expire in 2007, should be extended; and

22 WHEREAS, the legislature pledges to all minority
23 populations that this type of harassment or disenfranchisement
24 will not be tolerated in this state;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it be committed to the long-range
2 study of election reform and encourage local governments to
3 place more emphasis on elections administration within the
4 great state of New Mexico; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
6 transmitted to the state chapter of the national association
7 for the advancement of colored people, the New Mexico Hispanic
8 roundtable, the all Indian pueblo council and the New Mexico
9 voter services coalition as a sign of the legislature's
10 unwavering commitment to the preservation of voting rights for
11 minorities and to the principles of election reform.