

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 89

46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 27, 2003 AS "BILINGUAL EDUCATION DAY" AT THE
LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is fortunate to be a multilingual,
multicultural state, where multiple languages and cultures come
together to form a unique, living-and-breathing mosaic; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is the only state in the United States
that has a commitment to the Spanish language written into its
constitution; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a long and significant history of
recognizing bilingualism and bilingual education; and

WHEREAS, in 1523, the king of Spain issued a proclamation
to all priests serving in America to learn the language of the
natives of Mexico and the northern territory to facilitate the
teaching of the holy scriptures in the languages of the

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1 natives; and

2 WHEREAS, in 1540, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's
3 exploration of New Mexico was done bilingually, in Spanish and
4 Nahuatl, assuming the latter to be the language of the natives
5 in the north; and

6 WHEREAS, in 1848, English was added the as ninth language
7 in New Mexico's multilingual mix, which consisted of Navajo,
8 Apache, Keres, Tewa, Tiwa, Towa, Zuni and Spanish; and

9 WHEREAS, the 1891 Public Education Act did not bar
10 instruction in Spanish, alongside English, and much of the
11 school curriculum was in both languages; and

12 WHEREAS, during the constitutional convention of 1912,
13 Spanish and English were declared the official languages of the
14 state; and

15 WHEREAS, the first bilingual education policy statement
16 in the United States was issued by the state board of education
17 in 1968, and the first bilingual education law in the United
18 States was issued by the New Mexico legislature in 1969; and

19 WHEREAS, the New Mexico legislature authorized dual
20 language immersion training institutes at three universities in
21 1994, and pilot programs of two-way dual language immersion
22 were initiated in five school districts in the state in 1996;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, research has shown that students who are
25 bilingual and biliterate are better prepared to succeed

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1 academically than are monolingual students, and knowledge of
2 more than one language is advantageous for all students in the
3 interglobal marketplace, where bilingualism and biliteracy is
4 are assets;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 27, 2003 be declared
7 "Bilingual Education Day" at the legislature.

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