

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SERVICE TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR INCLUDING A WOMEN'S RESTROOM OFF THE HOUSE LOUNGE.

WHEREAS, the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States constitution has never passed, which is a disgrace in a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has always been more progressive on this issue, having passed its own constitutional amendment in 1972, even before it ratified the United States constitutional amendment; and

WHEREAS, the designers of the capitol renovation, which occurred in 1992, were apparently unaware that New Mexico is an equal rights state because they did not provide for the equal right to restroom space on the first floor for men and women legislators; and

WHEREAS, the number of women legislators has almost doubled since 1992, and the trend is expected to continue; and

WHEREAS, perhaps the designers possessed too little imagination about the role women would play in the New Mexico legislature, or perhaps all of the designers were men; and

WHEREAS, in any case, there is only a gentlemen's area off the house lounge, and women representatives are forced to go around to the senate side to use the gentle ladies' room;

and

WHEREAS, often, the gentle ladies of the house are forced to choose between comfort, even health, and voting because there is no women's comfort station accessible from the house lounge; and

WHEREAS, the situation is decidedly unequal;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative building services department and the legislative council service be requested to develop a plan for providing access for both women and men from the house lounge to their own separate comfort stations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, if access is not provided by the time of the special legislative session later this spring or by the next legislative session, the legislative building services department convert the house lounge men's room to a women's room; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if full and fair access cannot be achieved through an additional restroom or the redesign of existing restrooms to provide equal access off the house lounge, then the speaker of the house should provide for a rotating use of the house lounge bathroom, either annually or for some longer period determined by the body; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, when it is the women's turn, the legislative building services department provide for

an attractive cabinet or some other nonpermanent structure to hide the gender-specific wall-mounted appliances; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the legislative building services department and the legislative council service.