

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BEN LUJAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO AND WISHING HIM VAYA CON DIOS ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE NEW MEXICO STATE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the year 1975 was notable in many ways, for example:

A. the yearly inflation rate was around nine percent, causing President Gerald R. Ford to declare a national recession;

B. the price of a barrel of oil was more than thirteen dollars (\$13.00), and a gallon of gasoline cost forty-four cents (\$.44);

C. long-distance telephone calls sounded scratchy and were very expensive; there were no cordless phones; and cell phones were in the same category as flying cars;

D. computers were giant machines at Los Alamos national laboratory and Sandia national laboratories, and no one owned a word processor;

E. the Pittsburgh Steelers defeated the Minnesota Vikings 16-6 in Super Bowl IX;

F. Jimmy Hoffa disappeared, never to be seen again; and

G. after having served as chair of the Santa Fe

county commission, thirty-nine-year-old Ben Lujan took his seat in the New Mexico house of representatives as part of a class of eighteen new solons;

WHEREAS, early on, the young legislator made his mark as a member of the appropriations and finance committee and what was then called the privileges and elections committee; and

WHEREAS, then-Representative Lujan held his first leadership position during the 1977 legislative session when he served as chair of the printing and supplies committee; and

WHEREAS, during the first "cowboy coalition", then-Representative Lujan lost his chairmanship, but in 1983, the house democratic caucus elected him majority whip, and, as such, he never looked back; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan's leadership service as majority whip from 1983 through 1998, majority floor leader from 1999 through 2000 and as speaker of the house of representatives from 2001 through the centennial session of the legislature places him among just a handful of legislators across the country who have served in leadership positions continuously for thirty years; and

WHEREAS, the significantly diverse range of talents and experiences that each leadership position demands of its holder has showcased Speaker Lujan's ability to understand, learn and successfully master unique skills to perform each of the positions, with a common thread of dedication to the

integrity and effectiveness of the house of representatives in serving New Mexicans; and

WHEREAS, Representative Lujan, Majority Whip Lujan, Majority Floor Leader Lujan, Speaker Lujan has committed himself to issues that have a dramatic impact on each New Mexican and allow the citizen legislature to be a clear way to help make daily life better for the people he serves; and

WHEREAS, during his long service in the house of representatives, Speaker Lujan fought tirelessly to protect homeowners from suddenly escalating property taxes; to boost the minimum wage for New Mexicans; to attract new businesses with job training programs and tax incentives; to improve New Mexico roads, highways, public buildings and other infrastructure; and to ensure that New Mexico's water supply remains plentiful and clean; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan also found time to pose the official state question, "Red or Green?", although it took him eight years and all of his political skill to forge the consummate compromise and to answer the question with "Christmas"; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan championed legislative reform efforts, including implementation of a new member orientation, which, while accepted as routine today, was not offered to the newly elected Ben Lujan and his peers, as the veteran legislators sought to maintain their power and control; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan knows the importance of providing excellent constituent services and has helped countless residents of his northern New Mexico district, as well as other New Mexicans, wade through the bureaucracy of state government; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan repeatedly demonstrates an unmatched stamina during marathon floor sessions, committee hearings and meetings during the legislative sessions and an unequalled ability to gauge the fate of key legislation, as well as work to bring it to the house in a form that can garner majority support; and

WHEREAS, his understanding of the role in making party leadership successful is reflected in his unfailing loyalty to those who have contributed so significantly to that success and his own appreciation of those who have supported his leadership; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan's tenacity and no-nonsense demeanor in the legislative arena often lead casual observers to mistakenly believe that his legislative efforts are paramount in his life, while the few who know him better understand that his deep affection for Carmen, his wife and life-long partner, their children and their grandchildren have been, are and will forever be foremost in his head and heart; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, legislators have the advantage of

instant access and communication through laptops, cell phones and other marvels of modern technology; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan's leadership has never relied upon the trappings of office but upon determination, advocacy on behalf of his constituents and the causes in which he believes and loyalty to the legislative institution;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that constant and continuing gratitude be expressed to Ben Lujan, the man, the friend, the neighbor and the family man who has been willing to serve, and to Speaker Ben Lujan, the leader, the inspiration, the embodiment of success in his thirty years of leadership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives of the state of New Mexico join with the people of New Mexico in showing support of his continuing efforts and wish Speaker Ben Lujan the same kind of success in the future that he has shared with us over these past thirty-seven years.