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HOUSE MEMORIAL 52

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019

INTRODUCED BY

Georgene Louis

A MEMORIAL

EXPRESSING STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2019, A TRANSFORMATIVE SET OF REFORMS TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY AND RETURN POLITICAL POWER TO THE PEOPLE BY MAKING IT EASIER TO VOTE, ENDING THE DOMINANCE OF BIG MONEY IN POLITICS AND ENSURING THAT PUBLIC OFFICIALS WORK FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

WHEREAS, the act of voting, of being able to elect leaders and set the course as a nation, defines the United States at home and in the eyes of the world; and

WHEREAS, election law experts generally agree that the biggest regulatory barrier to more widespread participation is the voter registration process and that, unlike in many other democracies where the government itself is responsible for registering eligible voters, most states in this country place the burden on the voters to get themselves registered; and

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1 WHEREAS, millions of eligible residents in the United
2 States are blocked from the polls, often by an outdated and
3 error-prone voter registration system that results in too many
4 Americans going to vote on election day and finding that their
5 names are not on the voter rolls and, often, that they have
6 been wrongly deleted; and

7 WHEREAS, it is time to modernize voter registration to
8 make it easier, not harder, to vote and to ensure that all
9 eligible voters have a say in democracy; and

10 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 improves access to
11 the ballot box by taking aim at institutional barriers to
12 voting by creating automatic voter registration across the
13 nation, ensuring that individuals who have completed felony
14 sentences have their full rights restored, expanding early
15 voting and modernizing the United States voting system; and

16 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 promotes Native
17 Americans' constitutionally guaranteed right to vote, including
18 voter registration, equal access to all voting mechanisms and a
19 commitment to restoring the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 commits congress
22 to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and ends partisan
23 gerrymandering to prevent politicians from picking their
24 voters; and

25 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 ensures that

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1 United States elections are decided by United States voters
2 without interference, by enhancing federal support for voting
3 system security, increasing oversight over election vendors and
4 requiring the development of a national strategy ensuring the
5 integrity of the nation's democratic institutions; and

6 WHEREAS, in 2010, the United States supreme court's
7 *Citizens United v. FEC* ruling enabled unfettered spending in
8 elections that resulted in a flood of so-called dark money that
9 has allowed powerful groups and individuals to pour hundreds of
10 millions of dollars into influencing elections while obscuring
11 the sources of their funding; and

12 WHEREAS, this deluge of dark money runs contrary to the
13 supreme court's assumption in *Citizens United v. FEC* that this
14 unlimited spending would be transparent to voters; and

15 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 guarantees
16 disclosure by shining a light on dark money in politics by
17 upgrading online political advertising disclosure and requiring
18 all organizations involved in political activity to disclose
19 their large donors; and

20 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 gives political
21 power to everyday Americans by creating a multiple matching
22 system for small donations, thereby amplifying the political
23 voice of small donors, allowing the American people to exercise
24 their due influence in politics; and

25 WHEREAS, the country's current patchwork of ethics laws is

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1 failing to guard against corruption and conflicts of interest,
2 thereby allowing the wealthy and well-connected to buy
3 influence over the policymaking process in many ways, including
4 providing financial incentives to public servants and hiring
5 lobbyists who maintain cozy relationships with government
6 officials; and

7 WHEREAS, this stacking of the deck tilts policy decisions
8 toward the interests of those who can afford to buy influence:
9 big corporations and the very affluent; and

10 WHEREAS, in recent months, numerous public opinion surveys
11 indicate that as many as seventy-five percent of voters said
12 ending the culture of corruption in Washington, D.C., was "very
13 important" when deciding how to vote, and among independents,
14 the gap in importance of these issues is even larger; and

15 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 breaks the
16 influence economy, increases accountability and attacks a
17 culture of corruption in Washington, D.C., by expanding the
18 conflict-of-interest law and divestment requirements, slowing
19 the revolving door, restricting members of congress from using
20 their public positions for private gain, prohibiting members of
21 congress from sitting on corporate boards and requiring the
22 presidents of the United States to disclose their tax returns;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 gives teeth to
25 federal ethics enforcement by overhauling the office of

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1 government ethics, closing loopholes for lobbyists and foreign
2 agents, ensuring that watchdogs have sufficient resources to
3 enforce the law and creating a code of ethics for the United
4 States supreme court; and

5 WHEREAS, the For the People Act of 2019 ensures that there
6 are enforcers on the campaign finance beat who will enforce the
7 laws already on the books, tighten the rules on super political
8 action committees and restructure the federal election
9 commission to break the gridlock and enhance enforcement
10 mechanisms;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
12 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it call upon
13 the New Mexico congressional delegation to vote in favor of the
14 For the People Act of 2019; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
16 transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional
17 delegation.