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SENATE MEMORIAL 10

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

INTRODUCED BY

Cisco McSorley

A MEMORIAL

CONDEMNING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND THE DAMAGE
CAUSED TO NEW MEXICO'S NAVAJO NATION MEMBERS.

WHEREAS, at midnight eastern standard time on December 22,
2018, a partial shutdown of the United States federal
government occurred when the president of the United States and
congress were unable to agree on legislation appropriating
funds for the upcoming year and a temporary continuing
resolution was not enacted in time; and

WHEREAS, while the government shutdown has been described
as a political game of chicken, it is no game to many Native
American tribal governments that rely heavily on federal money
to operate, and the shutdown has crippled many basic functions;
and

WHEREAS, generations ago, tribes entered into treaties

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1 with the United States government that guaranteed funds for
2 services such as health care and education in exchange for huge
3 parcels of territory; and

4 WHEREAS, many tribal governments rely on federal dollars
5 to pay police officers or to run schools and hospitals; and

6 WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation is a mostly rural reservation
7 that spans parts of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah, and many
8 residents live on dirt roads; and

9 WHEREAS, the bureau of Indian affairs under the United
10 States department of the interior normally maintains Navajo
11 Nation roads; and

12 WHEREAS, as frigid temperatures and significant snowstorms
13 moved into the Navajo Nation during the holidays, residents
14 were trapped in their homes as federally funded snowplows
15 stopped running; and

16 WHEREAS, because of unplowed and snow-drifted roads, many
17 Navajo Nation residents were unable to make trips to buy
18 urgently needed essentials such as water, groceries and
19 medicine; and

20 WHEREAS, the federal government contributes to the
21 salaries of many members of the Navajo Nation; and

22 WHEREAS, Navajo Nation president Russell Begaye said the
23 lack of pay for members who rely on federal government
24 contributions to salaries hurts families on the reservation,
25 where a single salary can support a family of six or more

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1 people; and

2 WHEREAS, leaders and tribal members in Indian country are
3 burdened by not knowing how much longer they can operate or if
4 they will be reimbursed for shutdown-related expenses; and

5 WHEREAS, the inability of the president and congress to
6 reach a solution and pass a budget and the continued furloughs
7 and closures directly affect the quality of life for Navajo
8 Nation members;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
10 OF NEW MEXICO that the federal government be condemned for its
11 inability to govern with the best interests of people before
12 politics; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the president of the United
14 States and congressional leaders be requested to rise above
15 their partisan bickering and end the government shutdown; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
17 transmitted to the president of the United States, the
18 president pro tempore of the United States senate, the speaker
19 of the United States house of representatives and Navajo Nation
20 president Russell Begaye.