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HOUSE MEMORIAL 54

55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2022

INTRODUCED BY

Pamelya Herndon

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 11, 2022 "AFRICAN-AMERICAN DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, African-American day is a celebration of the achievements and contributions of African Americans to the history of both New Mexico and the United States; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico recognizes the importance of honoring African Americans, having enacted Section 12-5-12 NMSA 1978, which states, "The second Friday of February of each year shall be set apart and be known as "African-American day"; and

WHEREAS, African-American day is a celebration of the many sacrifices that African Americans have made toward the democracy everyone enjoys today; and

WHEREAS, African-American day shall be observed by the people of New Mexico in recognition of those efforts; and

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1 WHEREAS, African-American day is celebrated in tandem with
2 Black history month; and

3 WHEREAS, the celebration of African-American day is also a
4 time for people to reflect upon the need to diversify thinking
5 and strategic planning to ensure that all voices are heard in
6 decisions that affect New Mexico and New Mexicans; and

7 WHEREAS, African-American day provides an opportunity to
8 honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black
9 Americans in every area of endeavor throughout history; and

10 WHEREAS, Black history month should not be treated as
11 though it is separate from the collective American history or
12 as though Black history month is merely a compilation of
13 greatest hits, ranging from the March on Washington to some of
14 the most memorable court cases inspired by African Americans'
15 experiences, but rather as a day that is focused on the shared
16 experiences of all African Americans commingled into a recipe
17 that everyone can appreciate; and

18 WHEREAS, the African American community in New Mexico has
19 a compelling legacy that dates back to 1539, when Esteban, a
20 Spanish Moor from North Africa, traveled to New Mexico seeking
21 gold; and

22 WHEREAS, after the civil war, from three thousand three
23 hundred to three thousand eight hundred African American
24 soldiers, proudly known as the buffalo soldiers, a term given
25 to the troops by Native Americans, were garrisoned at eleven

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1 different forts throughout the territory of New Mexico; and

2 WHEREAS, today, New Mexico has a vibrant African American
3 community with a population of approximately fifty-five
4 thousand Black people, according to the United States census
5 bureau; and

6 WHEREAS, this past year has seen increased attention on
7 police violence, systemic racism and disproportionate health
8 outcomes faced by African Americans; and

9 WHEREAS, efforts to advance racial equality and civil
10 engagement are urgent in light of recent history; and

11 WHEREAS, everyone is encouraged to celebrate African-
12 American day by honoring the contributions that African
13 Americans have made throughout history, while also recognizing
14 that the fight for racial justice and equality continues to
15 this day;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
17 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 11,
18 2022 be designated "African-American Day" in the house of
19 representatives; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
21 transmitted to the governor, the executive director of the New
22 Mexico office on African American affairs, the board chair of
23 the African American museum and cultural center of New Mexico
24 and the president of the national association for the
25 advancement of colored people-New Mexico.

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