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HOUSE MEMORIAL 57

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 9, 2024 "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 day to reflect on 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 for diversity in
5 thinking and strategic planning as laws and policies are
6 developed to ensure that all voices are heard in decisions that
7 affect New Mexico and New Mexicans; and

8 WHEREAS, African-American day provides an opportunity to
9 honor the often-forgotten accomplishments of Black Americans to
10 every important outcome that makes up the history of the state
11 and the country; and

12 WHEREAS, Black history month should not be treated as
13 though it is separate from the collective American history or
14 as though Black history month is merely a compilation of
15 greatest hits, ranging from the badges and incidents of slavery
16 to some of the most important supreme court cases that have
17 created precedents inspired by African American experiences,
18 but rather as a day that is focused on the shared experiences
19 of African Americans blended into a recipe that creates a
20 unique flavor of diversity with a multicultural experience that
21 everyone can appreciate; and

22 WHEREAS, the African American community in New Mexico has
23 a compelling legacy that dates back to 1539, when Esteban, a
24 Spanish Moor from North Africa, traveled to New Mexico seeking
25 gold; and

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1 WHEREAS, after the civil war, thousands of African
2 American soldiers, also known as the buffalo soldiers, were
3 garrisoned at eleven different forts throughout the territory
4 of New Mexico; and

5 WHEREAS, today, New Mexico has a vibrant African American
6 community with a growing population that is still not fully
7 embraced, as evidenced by disproportionate health outcomes,
8 housing disparities and high unemployment; and

9 WHEREAS, efforts to advance racial equality and civil
10 engagement continue to be urgent priorities; and

11 WHEREAS, the great contributions that African Americans
12 have made to both the history of New Mexico and the history of
13 the United States should be celebrated and acknowledged while
14 also recognizing that the fight for racial justice and equality
15 continues everyday;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
17 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 9,
18 2024 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
22 office on African American affairs, the president of the
23 university of New Mexico, the president of the New Mexico black
24 caucus and the president of the New Mexico state conference of
25 the national association for the advancement of colored people.

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