

A JOINT MEMORIAL

URGING CONGRESS TO SUPPORT NAVAJO NATION CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FOR ADULTS AND JUVENILES TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SPACES, DECENT FACILITIES AND SPACE FOR PROGRAMMING FOR NATIVE AMERICAN INMATES.

WHEREAS, inmates on the Navajo Nation are warehoused in fifty-four-year-old facilities that do not meet contemporary standards for square footage, lighting, exercise or programming; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation discovered, after building the prisons in 1951, that the federal government would not aid in improving or maintaining facilities not built with federal dollars; and

WHEREAS, the treaty of 1868 between the United States and the Navajo Nation explicitly ensured safety for the Navajo people, an assurance further implied by the federal Snyder Act; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation averages only one law enforcement officer for every four thousand persons, compared to four officers per one thousand, on average, throughout the rest of the country; and

WHEREAS, lawlessness and disrespect result from awareness on the part of offenders that there is too little money for enforcement and limited space for incarceration; and

WHEREAS, detention facilities in Crownpoint, Shiprock and Ramah will soon close because of dilapidation, overcrowding and hazardous conditions; and

WHEREAS, because Shiprock and Crownpoint have no juvenile facilities, young people arrested there are transported to Tohatchi, approximately sixty-five miles away, or to the Chinle youth corrections facility, nearly one hundred fifty miles away; and

WHEREAS, Navajo Nation facilities in New Mexico serve over ten thousand of the approximately thirty-eight thousand adult prisoners per year incarcerated on the Navajo Nation; and

WHEREAS, crime is on the rise on the Navajo Nation even though the violent crime rate is declining nationwide; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation has tried unsuccessfully, since 2000, to get federal funding for improved corrections facilities for Native American adults and youth;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the United States congress be encouraged to provide thirty-five million seven hundred thousand dollars (\$35,700,000) for new facilities at Shiprock, Crownpoint and Ramah; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New Mexico's congressional delegation be made aware of the vital importance of the improvement of corrections facilities and programs on the

Navajo Nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be sent to the members of the congressional delegation and to the Navajo Nation.