

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 96

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

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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 PRISONERS.

WHEREAS, prisoners 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 Navajo Nation averages only one law
enforcement officer for every four thousand persons, compared

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1 to twelve officers per thousand, on average, throughout the
2 rest of the country; and

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

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

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

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

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

19 WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation has tried unsuccessfully, since
20 2000, to get federal funding for improved corrections
21 facilities for Native American adults and youth;

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

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1 Crownpoint and Ramah; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New Mexico's congressional
3 delegation be made aware of the vital importance of the
4 improvement of corrections facilities and programs on the
5 Navajo Nation; and

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

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