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HOUSE MEMORIAL 75

**50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012**

INTRODUCED BY

Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BEN LUJAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO AND WISHING HIM VAYA CON DIOS ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE NEW MEXICO STATE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the year 1975 was notable in many ways, for example:

A. the yearly inflation rate was around nine percent, causing President Gerald R. Ford to declare a national recession;

B. the price of a barrel of oil was more than thirteen dollars (\$13.00), and a gallon of gasoline cost forty-four cents (\$.44);

C. long-distance telephone calls sounded scratchy and were very expensive; there were no cordless phones; and

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1 cell phones were in the same category as flying cars;

2 D. computers were giant machines at Los Alamos  
3 national laboratory and Sandia national laboratories, and no  
4 one owned a word processor;

5 E. the Pittsburgh Steelers defeated the Minnesota  
6 Vikings 16-6 in Super Bowl IX;

7 E. Jimmy Hoffa disappeared, never to be seen again;  
8 and

9 F. after having served as chair of the Santa Fe  
10 county commission, thirty-nine-year-old Ben Lujan took his seat  
11 in the New Mexico house of representatives as part of a class  
12 of eighteen new solons;

13 WHEREAS, early on, the young legislator made his mark as a  
14 member of the appropriations and finance committee and what was  
15 then called the privileges and elections committee; and

16 WHEREAS, then-Representative Lujan held his first  
17 leadership position during the 1977 legislative session when he  
18 served as chair of the printing and supplies committee; and

19 WHEREAS, during the first "cowboy coalition", then-  
20 Representative Lujan lost his chairmanship, but in 1983, the  
21 house democratic caucus elected him majority whip, and, as  
22 such, he never looked back; and

23 WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan's leadership service as majority  
24 whip from 1983 through 1998, majority floor leader from 1999  
25 through 2000 and as speaker of the house of representatives

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1 from 2001 through the centennial session of the legislature  
2 places him among just a handful of legislators across the  
3 country who have served in leadership positions continuously  
4 for thirty years; and

5 WHEREAS, the significantly diverse range of talents and  
6 experiences that each leadership position demands of its holder  
7 has showcased Speaker Lujan's ability to understand, learn and  
8 successfully master unique skills to perform each of the  
9 positions, with a common thread of dedication to the integrity  
10 and effectiveness of the house of representatives in serving  
11 New Mexicans; and

12 WHEREAS, Representative Lujan, Majority Whip Lujan,  
13 Majority Floor Leader Lujan, Speaker Lujan has committed  
14 himself to issues that have a dramatic impact on each New  
15 Mexican and allow the citizen legislature to be a clear way to  
16 help make daily life better for the people he serves; and

17 WHEREAS, during his long service in the house of  
18 representatives, Speaker Lujan fought tirelessly to protect  
19 homeowners from suddenly escalating property taxes; to boost  
20 the minimum wage for New Mexicans; to attract new businesses  
21 with job training programs and tax incentives; to improve New  
22 Mexico roads, highways, public buildings and other  
23 infrastructure; and to ensure that New Mexico's water supply  
24 remains plentiful and clean; and

25 WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan also found time to pose the

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1 official state question, "Red or Green?", although it took him  
2 eight years and all of his political skill to forge the  
3 consummate compromise and to answer the question with  
4 "Christmas"; and

5 WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan championed legislative reform  
6 efforts, including implementation of a new member orientation,  
7 which, while accepted as routine today, was not offered to the  
8 newly elected Ben Lujan and his peers, as the veteran  
9 legislators sought to maintain their power and control; and

10 WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan knows the importance of providing  
11 excellent constituent services and has helped countless  
12 residents of his northern New Mexico district, as well as other  
13 New Mexicans, wade through the bureaucracy of state government;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan repeatedly demonstrates an  
16 unmatched stamina during marathon floor sessions, committee  
17 hearings and meetings during the legislative sessions and an  
18 unequaled ability to gauge the fate of key legislation, as well  
19 as work to bring it to the house in a form that can garner  
20 majority support; and

21 WHEREAS, his understanding of the role in making party  
22 leadership successful is reflected in his unfailing loyalty to  
23 those who have contributed so significantly to that success and  
24 his own appreciation of those who have supported his  
25 leadership; and

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1           WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan's tenacity and no-nonsense demeanor  
2           in the legislative arena often lead casual observers to  
3           mistakenly believe that his legislative efforts are paramount  
4           in his life, while the few who know him better understand that  
5           his deep affection for Carmen, his wife and life-long partner,  
6           their children and their grandchildren have been, are and will  
7           forever be foremost in his head and heart; and

8           WHEREAS, in 2012, legislators have the advantage of  
9           instant access and communication through laptops, cell phones  
10          and other marvels of modern technology; and

11          WHEREAS, Speaker Lujan's leadership has never relied upon  
12          the trappings of office but upon determination, advocacy on  
13          behalf of his constituents and the causes in which he believes  
14          and loyalty to the legislative institution;

15          NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
16          REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that constant and  
17          continuing gratitude be expressed to Ben Lujan, the man, the  
18          friend, the neighbor and the family man who has been willing to  
19          serve, and to Speaker Ben Lujan, the leader, the inspiration,  
20          the embodiment of success in his thirty years of leadership;  
21          and

22          BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives  
23          of the state of New Mexico join with the people of New Mexico  
24          in showing support of his continuing efforts and wish Speaker  
25          Ben Lujan the same kind of success in the future that he has

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1 shared with us over these past thirty-seven years.

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