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HOUSE MEMORIAL 69

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017

INTRODUCED BY

Sheryl Williams Stapleton and Patricio Ruiloba

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 23, 2017 "CORRECTIONAL OFFICER AND DETENTION OFFICER DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, correctional officers and detention officers throughout New Mexico have one of the most difficult and stressful jobs; and

WHEREAS, correctional officers and detention officers are tasked with the operation of correctional and detention facilities and are responsible for the care and custody of inmates, as well as protecting the public from incarcerated individuals; and

WHEREAS, many of the correctional and detention facilities have unsafe conditions, with some facilities falling below the level of adequate funding; and

WHEREAS, lack of adequate funding has led to a reduction

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1 in critical training, a lack of vitally needed equipment for
2 officers and unsafe staffing levels, resulting in an increase
3 in assaults by inmates on officers; and

4 WHEREAS, because of high vacancy rates, with some
5 facilities above twenty percent officer vacancy, correctional
6 and detention officers are often forced to work mandatory
7 sixty- to seventy-hour work weeks, which in turn has led to
8 retention and recruitment issues and an even more hazardous
9 work environment for the officers and support staff; and

10 WHEREAS, forced mandatory overtime in such a stressful
11 environment has a direct correlation to mental and physical
12 fatigue, lack of focus, decreased efficiency and unsteady
13 judgment of correctional and detention officers; and

14 WHEREAS, these conditions cause officers to be less
15 effective on the job when dealing with incidents with inmates;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, the lack of funding has a negative impact on the
18 day-to-day mission of the officers; and

19 WHEREAS, there is also serious concern for facilities that
20 face millions of dollars in deferred maintenance; and

21 WHEREAS, the conditions in many of the correctional and
22 detention facilities across the state are reminiscent of the
23 conditions that led to the 1980 prison riot at the penitentiary
24 of New Mexico and incidents in other New Mexico facilities; and

25 WHEREAS, current conditions demand immediate recognition

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1 of the crisis and proposed solutions;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 23,
4 2017 be declared "Correctional Officer and Detention Officer
5 Day" in the house of representatives; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the difficult situations
7 correctional officers and detention officers face every day be
8 recognized; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor, the corrections
10 department and local governments be requested to work with the
11 legislature to address the problem of underfunding and unsafe
12 staffing levels at correctional and detention facilities; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
14 transmitted to the governor and the secretary of corrections.