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SENATE MEMORIAL 30

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

INTRODUCED BY

Howie C. Morales

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 18, 2017 "SILVER CITY TERRITORIAL CHARTER DAY" IN THE SENATE.

WHEREAS, on February 15, 1878, Governor Samuel Axtell signed the town of Silver City territorial charter; and

WHEREAS, this is the one-hundred-thirty-ninth anniversary of the charter signing; and

WHEREAS, Silver City is the oldest continuously incorporated municipality in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Grant county was formed in 1868 from the western portion of Dona Ana county; and

WHEREAS, after silver was discovered in 1870, the town site was laid out, and the name for the fledgling community was selected; and

WHEREAS, in 1871, Silver City was designated as the Grant

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1 county seat and consisted of two hundred eighty-four dwellings,  
2 five smelting furnaces, two hotels, two printing offices, a  
3 livery stable, a jewelry shop, a watchmaker's shop, two  
4 shoemakers, six quartz mills, ten retail shops, three bakeries,  
5 three meat markets, a brewery, four carpenter shops, two  
6 blacksmiths, a lumber yard and a brickyard; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1872, community leaders proposed a bill to the  
8 territorial legislature to authorize the incorporation of  
9 Silver City, but the bill failed to pass and a feeling of  
10 unrest began to grow in the community; and

11 WHEREAS, community leaders felt that the needs of Silver  
12 City were not being recognized by the territorial legislature;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, to make matters worse, the territory's Republican  
15 administration had reduced the number of legislative  
16 representatives to the territorial government from four to two;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Silver City leaders were feeling disenfranchised,  
19 and the seeds for a succession movement were sown; and

20 WHEREAS, led by residents of Silver City who had a growing  
21 disenchantment with New Mexico, Grant county petitioned the  
22 federal government to become a part of the Arizona territory;  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, Silver City leaders felt that Grant county was  
25 more economically, politically and culturally aligned with

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1 Arizona than with New Mexico; and

2 WHEREAS, Grant county waited until 1876, the one hundredth  
3 anniversary of the founding of the United States, to propose  
4 legislation that would allow Grant county to secede from New  
5 Mexico; and

6 WHEREAS, the Arizona territorial representative introduced  
7 a bill, but it died in committee and was never acted on; and

8 WHEREAS, after the failure of secession efforts, Silver  
9 City leaders regrouped and obtained a sponsor for a bill  
10 authorizing a territorial charter for Silver City that was  
11 introduced to the New Mexico legislature on January 31, 1878;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, the bill passed unanimously and was signed into  
14 law on February 15, 1878; and

15 WHEREAS, with the newly granted and hard-won territorial  
16 charter, Silver City residents could elect city officials and  
17 participate in self-governance; and

18 WHEREAS, the charter allowed for taxes to be collected and  
19 used for public improvements, such as streets and sidewalks,  
20 and to provide for public safety; and

21 WHEREAS, obtaining the territorial charter allowed the  
22 fledgling community to achieve even greater growth and  
23 prosperity;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
25 OF NEW MEXICO that February 18, 2017 be declared "Silver City

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1 Territorial Charter Day" in the senate; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
3 transmitted to the mayor of Silver City.

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