

1 A MEMORIAL

2 HONORING FORTY-THREE YEARS OF SERVICE BY STATE SENATOR JOHN  
3 PINTO AND DECLARING FEBRUARY 14, 2023 "SENATOR JOHN PINTO  
4 DAY" IN THE SENATE.

5  
6 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was born in 1924 to a family  
7 of Navajo shepherders and was raised in Lupton, Arizona, and  
8 Gallup, New Mexico, and passed on May 24, 2019; and

9 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto attended a bureau of Indian  
10 affairs boarding school in Fort Defiance, Arizona, and after  
11 many unsuccessful attempts to run away, he finally graduated;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, he received his bachelor's degree at the age of  
14 thirty-nine and a master's degree in elementary education  
15 from the university of New Mexico; and

16 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served in the United States  
17 marine corps as a Navajo code talker and, in 2001, received a  
18 congressional silver medal of honor for his service as a code  
19 talker; and

20 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto worked for twenty-eight  
21 years in the Gallup-McKinley county school system and served  
22 as the legislative liaison for the Navajo Nation division of  
23 transportation, beginning in October 1988; and

24 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as president of the  
25 Gallup Indian community center from 1950 through 1970, during

1 which time he helped to feed the homeless and the less-  
2 fortunate families of Gallup; and

3 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as president of the  
4 Breadsprings chapter, also known as the Baahaali chapter, of  
5 the Navajo Nation from 1950 to 1954; and

6 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as secretary-  
7 treasurer for the Red Rock chapter of the Navajo Nation from  
8 1954 to 1960; and

9 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as a member of the  
10 eastern Navajo tribal council from 1950 to 1960; and

11 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was elected in 1972 to the  
12 McKinley county board of county commissioners, where he  
13 served for four years as a commissioner; and

14 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served with distinction in  
15 the New Mexico senate since his arrival in 1977, when, as a  
16 hitchhiker, he was picked up in a snowstorm in Albuquerque by  
17 then fellow freshman senator Manny Aragon; and

18 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was a member of the interim  
19 legislative Indian affairs committee since it was first  
20 created in 1989 and was the chair of the senate Indian and  
21 cultural affairs committee since its creation in 1987; and

22 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was instrumental in the  
23 passage of numerous legislative initiatives, including the  
24 designation, in 1987, of "American Indian Day" in New Mexico;  
25 the creation, in 2004, of the first state cabinet-level

1 Indian affairs department; and the improvement of state  
2 highway 491 between Gallup and Shiprock; and

3 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto worked tirelessly for the  
4 improvement of state highway 491 between Gallup and Shiprock,  
5 which the legislature suggested, in 2003, be renamed "Senator  
6 John Pinto Highway"; and

7 WHEREAS, the Native American filmmakers grant fund was  
8 spearheaded by Senator John Pinto during his work in the 2019  
9 legislative session; and

10 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto worked with the interim  
11 legislative Indian affairs committee and with other lawmakers  
12 for several months to establish the grants; and

13 WHEREAS, one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in  
14 funding was made available through legislation passed in  
15 2019; and

16 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto would annually entertain his  
17 colleagues in the senate with his rendition, in Navajo, of  
18 the "potato song"; and

19 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was the senior member in the  
20 senate; and

21 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was a mentor, gentleman and  
22 wise leader whose kind demeanor earned him the full respect  
23 of the senate; and

24 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto had been married to his  
25 wife, Joann, for sixty-three years at the time of her

1 passing; and

2 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was known nationwide and in  
3 many foreign countries for his involvement in national  
4 legislative organizations;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it extend its congratulations to the  
7 family of the late Senator John Pinto on his forty-three  
8 years of service in the New Mexico senate, where he furthered  
9 the causes of his constituents, the Navajo Nation and the  
10 people of New Mexico; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that February 14, 2023 be  
12 declared "Senator John Pinto Day" in the senate; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
14 transmitted to Senator Shannon D. Pinto, the governor, the  
15 secretary of Indian affairs and the office of the president  
16 of the Navajo Nation.

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