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HOUSE MEMORIAL 42

**56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2023**

INTRODUCED BY

Pamelya Herndon

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 10, 2023 "AFRICAN-AMERICAN DAY" IN THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, African-American day is a celebration of the  
achievements and contributions of African Americans to the  
history of both New Mexico and the United States; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico recognizes the importance of honoring  
African Americans, having enacted Section 12-5-12 NMSA 1978,  
which states, "The second Friday of February of each year shall  
be set apart and be known as "African-American day"; and

WHEREAS, African-American day is a celebration of the many  
sacrifices that African Americans have made toward the  
democracy everyone enjoys today; and

WHEREAS, African-American day shall be observed by the  
people of New Mexico in recognition of those efforts; and

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1           WHEREAS, African-American day is celebrated in tandem with  
2 Black history month; and

3           WHEREAS, the celebration of African-American day is also a  
4 time for people to reflect upon the need to diversify thinking  
5 and strategic planning to ensure that all voices are heard in  
6 decisions that affect New Mexico and New Mexicans; and

7           WHEREAS, African-American day provides an opportunity to  
8 honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black  
9 Americans in every area of endeavor throughout history; and

10           WHEREAS, Black history month should not be treated as  
11 though it is separate from the collective American history or  
12 as though Black history month is merely a compilation of  
13 greatest hits, ranging from the March on Washington to some of  
14 the most memorable court cases inspired by African Americans'  
15 experiences, but rather as a day that is focused on the shared  
16 experiences of all African Americans commingled into a recipe  
17 that everyone can appreciate; and

18           WHEREAS, the African American community in New Mexico has  
19 a compelling legacy that dates back to 1539, when Esteban, a  
20 Spanish Moor from North Africa, traveled to New Mexico seeking  
21 gold; and

22           WHEREAS, after the civil war, from three thousand three  
23 hundred to three thousand eight hundred African American  
24 soldiers, proudly known as the buffalo soldiers, a term given  
25 to the troops by Native Americans, were garrisoned at eleven

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1 different forts throughout the territory of New Mexico; and

2 WHEREAS, today, New Mexico has a vibrant African American  
3 community with a population of approximately forty-four  
4 thousand people of African descent, according to the United  
5 States census bureau; and

6 WHEREAS, African Americans continue to face police  
7 violence, systemic racism and disproportionate health outcomes;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, efforts to advance racial equality and civil  
10 engagement continue to be urgent priorities; and

11 WHEREAS, the great contributions that African Americans  
12 have made to both the history of New Mexico and the history of  
13 the United States should be celebrated and acknowledged while  
14 also recognizing that the fight for racial justice and equality  
15 continues everyday;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
17 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 10,  
18 2023 be designated "African-American Day" in the house of  
19 representatives; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
21 transmitted to the governor, the executive director of the New  
22 Mexico office on African American affairs, the board chair of  
23 the African American museum and cultural center of New Mexico  
24 and the president of the national association for the  
25 advancement of colored people-New Mexico.

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