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SENATE MEMORIAL 4

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

INTRODUCED BY

Michael Padilla and Pete Campos

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING VOCALIST AND MUSICIAN ROBERTO GRIEGO, A NEW MEXICO
LOCAL LEGEND.

WHEREAS, Roberto Griego, also known as "the voice of New
Mexico", is a local legend for his vocal and musical talent;
and

WHEREAS, at the Chile Ristra restaurant inside Isleta
casino, he is a hometown celebrity; and

WHEREAS, Roberto, also fondly known as the "Billy the kid
of rancheras", holds court at the casino restaurant, saying
"hola" to everyone from cooks to customers as they stop to
greet him; and

WHEREAS, in the casino on Cinco de Mayo 2018, Roberto
rocked a packed, sold-out crowd with towering trumpets and
galloping guitars; and

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1 WHEREAS, Roberto was born after World War II in La Joya
2 and later moved to Albuquerque's bosque as a child, where he
3 was raised by his grandparents; and

4 WHEREAS, Roberto graduated from Rio Grande high school
5 during an era of fantastic music, with rock and rollers such as
6 Chuck Berry, Freddie King and Roy Orbison serving as early
7 influences; and

8 WHEREAS, Roberto picked up a guitar at age thirteen and
9 taught himself to play and sing by ear, without any technical
10 training; and

11 WHEREAS, Roberto's grandmother and aunt discouraged
12 Roberto's musical career and encouraged him to at least fill
13 out job applications, which he did, but Roberto always returned
14 to his music, practicing seven or eight hours a day; and

15 WHEREAS, music became his salvation, his life blood and a
16 positive outlet; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1968, Roberto enlisted in the New Mexico air
18 national guard, serving thirteen months in Korea during the
19 Vietnam conflict, and while stationed overseas, he joined his
20 first rock band, playing lead and rhythm guitar; and

21 WHEREAS, returning to Albuquerque after his military
22 deployment, Roberto was employed by Yellow freight and enrolled
23 at the Albuquerque technical-vocational institute, taking
24 courses in accounting and business law, where he learned to
25 compose official, legally binding music contracts, a skill he

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1 employed throughout his career; and

2 WHEREAS, on August 1, 1971, Roberto recorded his first two
3 songs: the classic bolero ranchero *Un Pobre Nomás* and *No Mas*
4 *Pensando*; and

5 WHEREAS, the recordings were huge successes, with *Un Pobre*
6 *Nomás* reaching number one on the charts in Mexico City; and

7 WHEREAS, the album was so popular that it was reproduced
8 and bootlegged into eight-tracks, cassettes, compact discs and
9 long-playing records, even showing up on iTunes today, with
10 Roberto joking that he would be a rich man if his music had not
11 been pirated; and

12 WHEREAS, Roberto enjoyed the adulation of large crowds,
13 performing at Albuquerque's Tingley coliseum with El Mariachi
14 Tenampa in 1974 in front of ten thousand people; and

15 WHEREAS, Roberto has performed in Texas, Utah, Arizona,
16 California and Wyoming, but his largest markets are in Colorado
17 and New Mexico, with thirty thousand fans at a two-day Cinco de
18 Mayo event, his largest crowd to date; and

19 WHEREAS, Roberto has opened for superstars such as guitar
20 master Freddy Fender and the Latin rock band War; and

21 WHEREAS, in 2001, enraged and inspired by the tragic
22 events of September 11, Roberto wrote *Americans Will Unite* for
23 the United States troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

24 WHEREAS, Roberto also composed music for his fellow
25 soldiers in 1991, during the Gulf War, when he wrote *Dios*

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1 *Bendiga a Nuestro Soldados, or God Bless Our Soldiers; and*

2 WHEREAS, when a member of his family passes, Roberto
3 writes a beautiful song for them as they continue on their
4 eternal journey, a ritual he has performed for his late father
5 and sister; and

6 WHEREAS, after more than fifty years in the music
7 industry, Roberto has created ten studio albums and two singles
8 in English, Spanish and bilingual, playing rancheras, cumbias,
9 corridos and ballads with that northern New Mexico sound mixed
10 with a touch of Tex-Mex; and

11 WHEREAS, Roberto has won various awards for his many
12 musical contributions, including best original song, mariachi
13 song of the year and a lifetime achievement award honoring New
14 Mexico performers; and

15 WHEREAS, Roberto exemplifies an enduring legacy of music
16 from the heart;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
18 OF NEW MEXICO that Roberto Griego, a consummate vocalist and
19 musician, be recognized as a New Mexico local legend; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
21 transmitted to Roberto Griego.

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