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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 20
46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003
INTRODUCED BY
Mimi Stewart

A JOINT MEMORIAL
REQUESTING SUPPORTING A PROPOSAL CALLING ON THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT TO REQUIRE INCREASED MEDIA COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS AND
ELECTIONS AND A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF FREE AIR TIME TO
CANDIDATES AS A CONDITION OF RECEIVING BROADCAST LICENSES.

WHEREAS, running for political office has become
prohibitively expensive for most ordinary citizens; and

WHEREAS, many citizens believe radio and television
stations do not provide sufficient information about election
issues and candidates; and

WHEREAS, the nation's broadcast television and radio
stations are scaling back on substantive coverage of candidates
and campaign issues even as they raise their advertising rates
to take advantage of the increased demand for advertising air
time generated by elections; and

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1 WHEREAS, the increased cost and reduced flow of campaign
2 communication on broadcast television and radio has created an
3 unfair advantage for wealthy candidates and candidates with
4 access to monied special interests, an unhealthy development
5 for our democracy; and

6 WHEREAS, the broadcast airwaves belong to the people; and

7 WHEREAS, the people, through the federal government, have
8 provided exclusive licenses to broadcasters to operate within
9 assigned frequencies on these airwaves, but only on the
10 condition that they serve the public interest; and

11 WHEREAS, this "public interest" standard must include
12 providing opportunities for candidates to deliver, and for
13 citizens to receive, a free and open flow of information just
14 prior to elections so that citizens can make informed voting
15 decisions;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it support a proposal endorsed by the
18 free air time coalition that calls on the federal government to
19 require that all broadcasters provide increased coverage of
20 campaigns and elections and a reasonable amount of free air
21 time to candidates just prior to elections as a condition of
22 receiving their broadcast licenses; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
24 transmitted to the New Mexico congressional delegation.

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