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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 3

46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003

INTRODUCED BY

Carlos R. Cisneros

A JOINT MEMORIAL

**EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE DEATH OF AND APPRECIATION FOR THE
LIFE OF LOUIS RICHARD ROCCO.**

**WHEREAS, Louis Richard Rocco died on October 31, 2001 of
lung cancer; and**

**WHEREAS, he was born on November 19, 1938 in Albuquerque;
and**

**WHEREAS, in 1970, he volunteered to assist a medical team,
whose mission was to evacuate eight severely wounded soldiers;
and**

**WHEREAS, he crashed with that team in a helicopter, under
intense enemy fire in South Vietnam; and**

**WHEREAS, with burned hands, a fractured wrist and hip and
a severely bruised back, he carried three survivors to safety
through twenty meters of hostile fire; and**

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1 WHEREAS, he received the Medal of Honor in 1974 for his
2 valor; and

3 WHEREAS, he grew up in East Los Angeles, where he dropped
4 out of high school and was frequently in trouble with the law;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, he was arrested, at the age of sixteen, for armed
7 robbery; and

8 WHEREAS, within one hour after his sentencing, he walked
9 into an army recruiting office and found himself telling his
10 life story to a sympathetic officer; and

11 WHEREAS, the officer helped Mr. Rocco get a suspended
12 sentence, and the court said that if he stayed in school,
13 obeyed a curfew and shunned his gang, he could join the army at
14 age seventeen; and

15 WHEREAS, he received his general equivalency diploma and
16 an associate's degree before leaving the army in 1978; and

17 WHEREAS, he served as director of the New Mexico veterans'
18 service commission; and

19 WHEREAS, he worked extensively for advocacy groups to keep
20 children off drugs and out of gangs; and

21 WHEREAS, as he was dying, he told an interviewer that he
22 was forgiving and "at peace" and said, "I'm going to die; I
23 don't want to die angry";

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that condolences be expressed to the family

. 142464. 1

1 and friends of Louis Richard Rocco, a loving and devoted New
2 Mexican; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this joint memorial
4 be transmitted to his wife, Maria.

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