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SENATE MEMORIAL 55

**48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007**

INTRODUCED BY

Pete Campos

A MEMORIAL

HONORING THIRTY YEARS OF SERVICE BY STATE SENATOR JOHN PINTO  
AND DECLARING FEBRUARY 28, 2007 "SENATOR JOHN PINTO DAY" AT THE  
SENATE.

WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was born in 1924 to a family  
of Navajo shepherders and was raised in Lupton, Arizona, and  
Gallup, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto attended a Bureau of Indian  
Affairs boarding school in Fort Defiance, Arizona, and after  
many unsuccessful attempts to run away, he finally graduated;  
and

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

WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served in the United States

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1 Marine Corps as a Navajo code talker and, in 2001, received a  
2 Congressional Silver Medal of Honor for his service as a code  
3 talker; and

4 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto worked for twenty-eight years  
5 in the Gallup-McKinley County school system and has served as  
6 the legislative liaison for the Navajo Nation Department of  
7 Transportation since October 1988; and

8 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as president of the  
9 Gallup Indian Community Center from 1950 through 1970, during  
10 which time he helped to feed the homeless and the less  
11 fortunate families of Gallup; and

12 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as president of the  
13 Breadsprings Chapter of the Navajo Nation from 1950 to 1954;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as secretary-treasurer  
16 for the Red Rock Chapter of the Navajo Nation from 1954 to  
17 1960; and

18 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto served as a member of the  
19 Eastern Navajo Tribal Council from 1950 to 1960; and

20 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto was elected in 1972 to the  
21 McKinley County Board of Commissioners, where he served for  
22 four years as a commissioner; and

23 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto has served with distinction in  
24 the New Mexico Senate since his arrival in 1977, when, as a  
25 hitchhiker, he was picked up in a snowstorm in Albuquerque by

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1 former fellow freshman Senator Manny Aragon; and

2 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto has been a member of the  
3 interim legislative Indian Affairs Committee since it was first  
4 created in 1989 and has been the chair of the Senate Indian and  
5 Cultural Affairs Committee since its creation in 1987; and

6 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto has been instrumental in the  
7 passage of numerous legislative initiatives, including the  
8 designation, in 1987, of "American Indian Day" in New Mexico;  
9 the creation, in 2004, of the first state-cabinet-level Indian  
10 Affairs Department; and the improvement of State Highway 491  
11 between Gallup and Shiprock; and

12 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto has worked tirelessly for the  
13 improvement of State Highway 491 between Gallup and Shiprock,  
14 which the legislature suggested, in 2003, be renamed "Senator  
15 John Pinto Highway"; and

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

19 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto is second only to President  
20 Pro Tempore Ben D. Altamirano in seniority in the senate; and

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

24 WHEREAS, Senator John Pinto is known nationwide and in  
25 many foreign countries for his involvement in national

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1 legislative organizations;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
3 OF NEW MEXICO that it extend its congratulations to Senator  
4 John Pinto on his thirty years of service in the New Mexico  
5 senate, where he has furthered the causes of his constituents,  
6 the Navajo Nation and the people of New Mexico; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that February 28, 2007 be declared  
8 "Senator John Pinto Day" at the senate; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
10 transmitted to Senator John Pinto.