

A MEMORIAL

MARKING THE NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY CODY UNSER WAS STRICKEN WITH TRANSVERSE MYELITIS AND DECLARING FEBRUARY 5, 2008 "CODY UNSER DAY" AT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, Cody Unser was stricken suddenly with transverse myelitis, commonly called TM, on February 5, 1999; and

WHEREAS, Cody, a basketball-playing sixth-grade girl, became paralyzed from the chest down and has remained so ever since; and

WHEREAS, the past nine years have transformed Cody's life, and she has transformed the level of support, research for and understanding of transverse myelitis and other spinal cord diseases and injuries; and

WHEREAS, Cody's reaction to learning to live in a wheelchair was to learn to scuba dive and to create a charitable foundation to seek a cure for TM; and

WHEREAS, that foundation is called the Cody Unser First Step Foundation, and it continues to build awareness of TM, promote medical cooperation and stimulate research; and

WHEREAS, Cody accepted Governor Richardson's request to serve as his national disabilities spokeswoman for his recent presidential bid; and

WHEREAS, as part of her promotion of funding for research, Cody has successfully helped the University of New

Mexico become a center of excellence, attracting new funding for New Mexico research on spinal cord injuries and diseases; and

WHEREAS, the Cody Unser First Step Foundation has formed charitable relationships with the Johns Hopkins Transverse Myelitis Center and its medical consortium affiliates, the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, the Kennedy-Krieger Spine Institute, the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, the Barrow Neurological Institute and the Transverse Myelitis Association and, most recently, New Mexico's Governor's Commission on Disability; and

WHEREAS, the foundation has awarded over one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to related research and education endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Cody is an ambassador for the Quickie Wheelchair events at Sunrise Medical, for Johns Hopkins' "PROJECT RESTORE" and for many symposia and consortia, and she hosts the "Winners on Wheels" web site; and

WHEREAS, Cody was named "One of the 21 coolest girls in America" by *YM Magazine*; and

WHEREAS, Cody has won *New Mexico Business Weekly's* "Power Kid" award, the national Prudential "Spirit of the Community" award and the National Philanthropy Day's President's Award, and she was the youngest-ever recipient of the YWCA "Women on the Move" award; and

WHEREAS, Cody also won the Grand Prix Americas Foundation's "Special Achievement Award" and now sits on the board of the Paralysis Health Action Plan Task Force in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, Cody has worked tirelessly for all quality-of-life programs for people with disabilities, including her own, sponsoring several "Cody's Great Scuba Adventure" programs; and

WHEREAS, the scuba program has now expanded, and Cody has enlisted other trainers to train people with other disabilities in scuba diving; and

WHEREAS, President Gerald and Betty Ford selected Cody as the recipient of the "People Helping People" award for the "Swim with Mike" program; and

WHEREAS, Cody was the first-ever recipient of the "Spinal Cord Injury Project Emerging Leader" award; and

WHEREAS, Cody has met with national and international leaders, including President Bush; Prince Andrew; Senators Pete Dominici, Jeff Bingaman, Hillary Clinton and Bill Frist; United States Representatives Heather Wilson and Diane DeGette; federal Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson; and the late Christopher Reeve and his late wife, Dana, to aid in their promotion of stem cell research; and

WHEREAS, Cody has been featured in numerous magazines, bringing to light the realities of living with a disability in

the United States today, not only for those with TM but for those with other disabilities as well, and advocating for stem cell research; and

WHEREAS, Cody has been featured on *Good Morning America*, *48 Hours* and *CNN* to focus interest on persons with disabilities, and she is now the subject of a documentary entitled "Cody", which is narrated by actor Paul Newman and produced by the city of Santa Fe and Christopher Productions, that reveals Cody in her day-to-day life as a full-time student at Redlands University; and

WHEREAS, having found her voice as a political activist early in life, Cody created her own degree program in biopolitics, with the intention of changing health policy from both the medical perspective and the legal perspective;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 5, 2008 be declared "Cody Unser Day" at the house of representatives in recognition of the good work of this young woman and her sincere and tireless dedication to the cause of stem cell research; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Cody's indomitable spirit be celebrated as the senate marks the day that this outstanding young woman was stricken with transverse myelitis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the Cody Unser First Step Foundation, the Johns

Hopkins Transverse Myelitis Center and its medical consortium
and University of New Mexico Carrie Tingley Children's
Hospital.