

1 A MEMORIAL

2 MARKING THE NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY CODY UNSER WAS  
3 STRICKEN WITH TRANSVERSE MYELITIS AND DECLARING FEBRUARY 5,  
4 2008 "CODY UNSER DAY" AT THE SENATE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 WHEREAS, as part of her promotion of funding for

1 research, Cody has successfully helped the University of New  
2 Mexico become a center of excellence, attracting new funding  
3 for New Mexico research on spinal cord injuries and diseases;  
4 and

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

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, Cody has won *New Mexico Business Weekly's*  
23 "Power Kid" award, the national Prudential "Spirit of the  
24 Community" award and the National Philanthropy Day's  
25 President's Award, and she was the youngest-ever recipient of

1 the YWCA "Women on the Move" award; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 WHEREAS, Cody has been featured in numerous magazines,

1 bringing to light the realities of living with a disability  
2 in the United States today, not only for those with TM but  
3 for those with other disabilities as well, and advocating for  
4 stem cell research; and

5 WHEREAS, Cody has been featured on *Good Morning America*,  
6 *48 Hours* and *CNN* to focus interest on persons with  
7 disabilities, and she is now the subject of a documentary  
8 entitled "Cody", which is narrated by actor Paul Newman and  
9 produced by the city of Santa Fe and Christopher Productions,  
10 that reveals Cody in her day-to-day life as a full-time  
11 student at Redlands University; and

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

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 5, 2008 be declared "Cody  
18 Unser Day" at the senate in recognition of the good work of  
19 this young woman and her sincere and tireless dedication to  
20 the cause of stem cell research; and

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

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

1 Johns Hopkins Transverse Myelitis Center and its medical  
2 consortium and University of New Mexico Carrie Tingley  
3 Children's Hospital. \_\_\_\_\_

SM 56  
Page 5

4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25