

A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL
AND JOINING THE NATION IN COMMEMORATING HIS BIRTH.

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809
in Hardin county, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln was a common man whose parents were
farmers; and

WHEREAS, the nation and the world are invited to
celebrate the birth, life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln on
February 12, 2009 for the bicentennial celebration of his
birth; and

WHEREAS, when Lincoln was born, the Spanish empire was
in its last year, and the spirit of independence was rising up
and moving across its lands, including in its far northern
settlements in New Mexico, and within one year of Lincoln's
birth, Mexico declared its independence from Spain; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln began his political career in 1832 as a
member of the Whig party, serving four successive terms in the
Illinois house of representatives; and

WHEREAS, in 1837, Lincoln made his first protest against
slavery in the Illinois house of representatives, stating that
the institution of slavery was "founded on both injustice and
bad policy"; and

WHEREAS, in 1846, Lincoln was elected to the United

States house of representatives at the very moment when New Mexico was under attack by United States forces because of President Polk's war with Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln firmly believed that President Polk had started a war of aggression based on deceit, and on two occasions, Lincoln rose in the house of representatives to question Polk's veracity, and his voice of dissent against this popular conflict was immediately labeled "unpatriotic"; and

WHEREAS, during Lincoln's life, New Mexico became a part of the Mexican republic and, following the Mexican-American war of 1846-1848, became a territory of the United States in 1851; and

WHEREAS, building upon a campaign against the expansion of slavery beyond the states in which it already existed, on November 6, 1860, Lincoln was elected as the sixteenth president of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Civil War began within six months of Lincoln's inauguration and New Mexico's own 1862 battle of Glorieta pass, characterized as the "Gettysburg of the West", which marked the confederacy's southwest aspirations; and

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln, though not as far-reaching as most people imagine, remains one of the nation's most important historical documents; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln's leadership in the Civil War era, coming as it did so soon after American sovereignty over New Mexico, made the then-fledgling Republican party a strong force in early New Mexico politics; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, Lincoln displayed a remarkable capacity for moral growth and self-reflection, ushering in a nation divided yet destined to find social healing; and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 1863, President Lincoln affixed his signature to the document that separated the territory of Arizona from New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, President Lincoln may be best known in New Mexico for the "Lincoln canes", which are ebony and capped with a silver crown inscribed with "A. Lincoln" and were presented in 1864 to the nineteen Pueblo Indian governors in recognition of the pueblos' newly received land patents and sovereignty that drew from a tradition implemented by the Spanish and Mexican governments; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln's name was memorialized in New Mexico when Lincoln county was established in 1869 and subsequently gave its name to the infamous Lincoln County War; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln forest reserve was created in 1902 and was renamed Lincoln national forest in 1918; and

WHEREAS, in 1909, the thirty-eighth New Mexico legislative assembly passed Joint Resolution Number Five,

which stated: "Lincoln Centenary Declared to be Legal Holiday in New Mexico"; and

WHEREAS, on February 12, 1909, Governor George Curry issued the Lincoln Day Proclamation, recognizing the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, and he recommended that it be recognized as a legal holiday; and

WHEREAS, in President Barack Obama's victory speech invoking Lincoln, President Obama reminded Americans that hope is one of the most powerful forces underlying transformation, and he encouraged all Americans to recognize that, in spite of doubts and divisions, Americans must always endeavor to "place our hands on the arc of history and bend it once more toward the hope of a better day"; and

WHEREAS, President Obama's confidence reflects the delicacy and strength of that moment and the man and movement behind it and comes as a reminder of the resplendent greatness of President Lincoln as we commemorate the bicentennial of his birth;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the tremendous importance of the Lincoln bicentennial be recognized on February 12, 2009 and that New Mexico join the nation in commemorating Abraham Lincoln's birth on that day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to Governor Richardson, the office of the state

historian and the United State's bicentennial commission.