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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 5

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012

INTRODUCED BY

Rick Miera

A JOINT MEMORIAL

PROCLAIMING JANUARY 27, 2012 AS "BILINGUAL EDUCATION DAY" AT
THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a long and significant history
that recognizes and supports bilingualism and bilingual
education for its people; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is a multilingual, multicultural state
in which multiple languages and cultures have come together
throughout history to form a unique, living-and-breathing
multicultural mosaic; and

WHEREAS, bilingualism existed in New Mexico from the time
its early pueblo inhabitants used two or more languages for
commerce and communication among diverse tribes to the time
Spanish settlers, and later English-speaking settlers, added
new languages to the region; and

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1 WHEREAS, in 1540, Spain's exploration of New Mexico was
2 accomplished bilingually using Spanish and Nahuatl, the
3 language spoken in Mexico by the Aztec people; and

4 WHEREAS, New Mexico added English to the multilingual mix
5 in 1848, as the ninth language spoken after Keres, Tewa, Tiwa,
6 Towa, Zuni, Navajo, Apache and Spanish; and

7 WHEREAS, New Mexico is the only state in the United States
8 that has constitutional provisions for maintaining a bilingual
9 citizenry and for declaring Spanish and English as official
10 languages of the state, which happened early in New Mexico's
11 history; and

12 WHEREAS, New Mexico educators have implemented instruction
13 in two languages from the state's territorial period through
14 today; and

15 WHEREAS, for the past one hundred years of statehood, the
16 New Mexico legislature has consistently supported the
17 maintenance of the state's languages and cultures in statute
18 and in legislative memorials; and

19 WHEREAS, in 1969, the New Mexico legislature passed the
20 first bilingual education law in the United States, supporting
21 Spanish and English bilingual education; and

22 WHEREAS, research demonstrates that inclusion of a child's
23 language and culture in the educational curriculum is an
24 educationally sound way to ensure a student's healthy identity,
25 which serves to sustain young people throughout their school

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1 years and on into successful careers as contributing members of
2 their respective communities; and

3 WHEREAS, nearly two-thirds of New Mexico school districts
4 offer sound learning opportunities in two languages for English
5 language learners, mainly for Hispanic and Native American
6 children who are in danger of losing their historical
7 languages, and for native English speakers wishing to acquire a
8 second or even third language; and

9 WHEREAS, bilingualism and multiculturalism are invaluable
10 assets in the international marketplace, with parents of
11 children in many countries ensuring that their children are
12 educated in two or three languages;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
14 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that January 27, 2012 be recognized as
15 "Bilingual Education Day" at the legislature; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the sound implementation of
17 quality bilingual programs continue as an option for public
18 schools in the state; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
20 department be encouraged to continue to fulfill its approval
21 and monitoring responsibilities to ensure that quality programs
22 continue to be implemented in schools that offer bilingual
23 education programs; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
25 transmitted to the secretary of public education and the New

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1 Mexico association for bilingual educators.

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