The Legislature
of the
State of New Mexico

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LAWS 2014

CHAPTER _________

SENATE MEMORIAL 63

Introduced by

SENATOR LISA TORRACO
A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE TRAGEDY OF THE 1980 PRISON RIOT AT THE
PENITENTIARY OF NEW MEXICO, THE INMATES WHOSE LIVES WERE LOST
AND THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS WHO WERE HELD HOSTAGE AND
EXPRESSING THE SENATE'S COMMITMENT TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM
THAT RESULTS IN GREATER PUBLIC SAFETY.

WHEREAS, from February 2 to February 4, 1980, the
penitentiary of New Mexico was the site of what remains one of
the most savage and deadly prison riots in this nation's
history; and

WHEREAS, a combination of overcrowding, lack of
programs, poor living conditions and unsatisfactory food led
to the riot and the ensuing thirty-six-hour siege of the
prison; and

WHEREAS, during those horrific hours, thirty-three
inmates were killed and at least ninety were seriously injured
by fellow inmates, and fourteen corrections officers were held
hostage, assaulted or injured by rioting inmates; and

WHEREAS, in the three decades since the 1980 New Mexico
prison riot, the corrections department, under the current
leadership of Secretary of Corrections Gregg Marcantel, has
worked to ensure that the combination of conditions that led
to the riot is never created again and that inmates are
provided with the proper balance of social control and support
and given the best opportunity possible to successfully
integrate into society, not re-offend and become contributing
taxpayers rather than tax liabilities; and

WHEREAS, the legislature recognizes that a properly
functioning corrections system is one that safely and
humanely incarcerates those persons who must be separated
from society and educates, trains and supports the
overwhelming number of inmates who will return to society;
and

WHEREAS, in recognition that inmates are people, that
the state bears the ultimate responsibility for their safety
while in custody and that the primary purpose of
incarceration must be to rehabilitate rather than to punish,
the names of the inmates who were killed in the 1980 riot are
hereby recognized: Michael Briones, age twenty-two;
Lawrence Cardon, age twenty-four; Nick Coca, age thirty;
Richard Fierro, age twenty-six; James Foley, age nineteen;
Donald Gossens, age twenty-three; Phillip Hernandez, age
thirty; Valentino Jaramillo, age thirty-five; Kelly Johnson,
age twenty-six; Steven Lucero, age twenty-five; Joe Madrid,
age thirty-eight; Ramon Madrid, age forty; Archie Martinez,
age twenty-five; Joseph Mirabal, age twenty-four; Ben Moreno,
age twenty; Gilbert Moreno, age twenty-five; Thomas O'Meara,
age twenty-five; Filiberto Ortega, age twenty-five;
Frank Ortega, age twenty; Paulina Paul, age thirty-six;
James Perrin, age thirty-four; Robert Quintela, age twenty-nine; Robert Rivera, age twenty-eight; Vincent Romero, age thirty-four; Herman Russell, age twenty-six; Juan Sanchez, age twenty-two; Frankie Sedillo, age thirty-one; Larry Smith, age thirty-one; Leo Tenorio, age twenty-five; Thomas Tenorio, age twenty-eight; Mario Urioste, age twenty-eight; Danny Waller, age twenty-six; and Russell Werner, age twenty-two; and

WHEREAS, in recognition that corrections officers are among the bravest, most dedicated public servants and face some of the most difficult working conditions, the names of the corrections officers who were taken hostage during the 1980 prison riot while in service to the people of New Mexico are hereby recognized: Captain Greg Roybal, Lieutenant Jose Anaya, Medical Technician Ross Maez and Corrections Officers Victor Gallegos, Elton Curry, Juan Bustos, Michael Hernandez, Ronnie Martinez, Michael Schmitt, Valentin Martinez, Antonio Vigil, Larry Mendoza, Edward Ortega and Ramon Gutierrez; and

WHEREAS, the corrections department's commitment to ensuring that the conditions that led to the riot never exist again is an integral part of the corrections department's philosophy, particularly under the leadership of Secretary Marcantel, and has manifested itself in everything from the continuing revitalization of the prison building,
"Old Main", to support for meaningful inmate programming; and

WHEREAS, the legislature's commitment has manifested
itself in support for broad and innovative reforms of the
criminal justice system through the creation of the criminal
justice reform subcommittee;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the tragedy of the 1980 prison riot
at the penitentiary of New Mexico and the men who were
killed, injured and taken hostage during the riot not be
forgotten; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the corrections department's
commitment to increasing public safety through lower
recidivism rates and improved rehabilitation of inmates be
commended; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate express its
support for meaningful criminal justice reform that results
in increased public safety and tax savings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that continued awareness of the
1980 prison riot and the events leading up to it serve to
strengthen the commitment of government leaders to advocate
for the fundamental rights and dignity of all, including
crime victims, correctional professionals and each inmate
assigned to the responsibility of the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
transmitted to the governor and the corrections