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State of New Mexico

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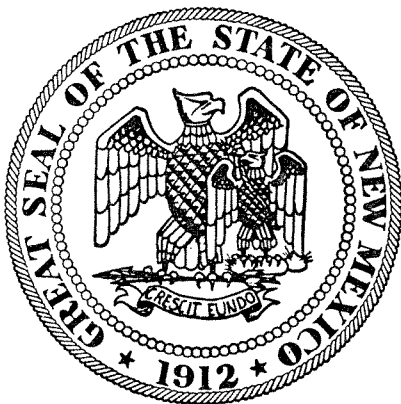
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CHAPTER _____

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 36

Introduced by

SENATOR RICHARD C. MARTINEZ



1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THAT THE SITE OF THE BATTLE OF PUERTECITO DE
3 POJOAQUE THAT OCCURRED ON JANUARY 27, 1838 BE COMMEMORATED BY
4 AN OFFICIAL HISTORIC MARKER AS AN EVENT AND LOCATION OF
5 HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE.
6

7 WHEREAS, the Rebellion of Rio Arriba has been the
8 subject of pundits and historians since its occurrence in
9 1837, and its causes have been analyzed by citizens and
10 authors in several publications, the most concise being
11 *Rebellion in Rio Arriba, 1837* by Janet Lecompt; and

12 WHEREAS, several governors of the department of
13 New Mexico, including Manuel Armijo, Santiago Abreu,
14 Francisco Sarracino, Albino Perez and Donaciano Vigil, were
15 involved in the rebellion, either as protagonists or
16 antagonists; and

17 WHEREAS, Donaciano Vigil, who served as the civil
18 governor of New Mexico during 1847 and 1848, addressed the
19 departmental assembly of New Mexico, before New Mexico had
20 become either a territory or a state of the United States,
21 and provided narratives recorded in *A Statement Concerning*
22 *Historical Events Between 1801-1851* to the historian and
23 collector William G. Ritch, in which the governor presented
24 the Rebellion of Rio Arriba as one of the major events of
25 New Mexico history; and

1 WHEREAS, family folklore in the rio arriba, or the
2 "upper river" country from Chimayo to El Rancho, kept story
3 fragments of the Rebellion of Rio Arriba in their oral
4 tradition and songs; and

5 WHEREAS, history has failed to memorialize leaders of
6 the Rebellion of Rio Arriba, including Governor Jose
7 Gonzales, Rafael Garcia, Desiderio Montoya, Antonio Abad
8 Montoya, Alcalde Juan Jose Esquibel, Antonio "El Coyote"
9 Vigil and Baltazar of Ohkay Owingeh, because they lost the
10 battle of Puertecito de Pojoaque in the face of better-armed
11 and better-organized Mexican forces and local militias; and

12 WHEREAS, many citizens in what was then the Mexican
13 department of New Mexico sought to oppose the constitutional
14 reforms of 1835, reforms in which Mexico sought to impose
15 taxes, centralize authority in Mexico City and restrict some
16 liberties that had been guaranteed by the 1824 Mexican
17 constitution; and

18 WHEREAS, neglect by the Mexican national government due
19 to internal political turmoil promoted economic and military
20 insecurity in New Mexico; and

21 WHEREAS, Juan Jose Esquibel, the alcalde of Santa Cruz
22 de la Canada, and factions from throughout New Mexico arose
23 in open defiance of the Mexican government, its authorities
24 and its constitution during the summer of 1837 and formed a
25 revolutionary council called the "Canton"; and

1 WHEREAS, fiscal irresponsibility, embezzlement and
2 political intrigue had reached a level that destroyed the
3 credibility of the Santa Fe government under the
4 administration of Governor Albino Perez and led to the
5 assassination on August 9, 1837 of Perez and several other
6 high-ranking officials; and

7 WHEREAS, during September of 1837, men who were
8 community leaders from the rio abajo, or the "lower river"
9 country of Albuquerque, Belen and Tome, issued the
10 "Pronouncement of Tome", which sought to bring order to the
11 chaos that ensued because of the Rebellion of Rio Arriba and
12 to counter the aims of the Canton and which installed
13 Manuel Armijo as political chief; and

14 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Justiniani of El Paso del
15 Norte arrived with a section of two hundred ninety-six men of
16 the Mexican army and an official appointment that made Armijo
17 the new governor of New Mexico; and

18 WHEREAS, on January 27, 1838, the forces under
19 Governor Armijo and Lieutenant Colonel Justiniani, numbering
20 five hundred eighty-two men, marched upon more than one
21 thousand three hundred revolutionaries at the Puertecito de
22 Pojoaque, located about eighteen miles north of Santa Fe, and
23 in the action, commander of the revolutionaries
24 Antonio "El Coyote" Vigil was killed, dozens died, many were
25 taken prisoner, others were seriously wounded and the dead

1 were said to have filled five wagons; and

2 WHEREAS, the famous Padre Jose Martinez of Taos served
3 as chaplain under Governor Manuel Armijo during the battle of
4 Puertecito de Pojoaque, and he performed last rites for the
5 dying; and

6 WHEREAS, Manuel Armijo entered the villa of Santa Cruz
7 de la Canada and found no opposition, bringing an end to the
8 Rebellion of Rio Arriba; and

9 WHEREAS, Manuel Armijo summarily executed the remaining
10 leaders of the rebellion, Jose Gonzales, the Montoyas and
11 Alcalde Juan Jose Esquibel; and

12 WHEREAS, the location of the battlefield is associated
13 with the place of Puertecito de Pojoaque, the location of
14 which is used as a reference point in Section 4-21-1 NMSA
15 1978 dating to 1851, where the section identifies that "The
16 boundaries of the county of Rio Arriba are as follows: on
17 the south from the Puertecito of Pojoaque, drawing a direct
18 line toward the west in the direction of the mesilla of
19 San Yldefonso; from the mesilla crossing the Rio del Norte
20 toward the west and continuing until it reaches the
21 boundaries of the territory; drawing a direct line from said
22 Puertecito de Pojoaque toward the east until it reaches the
23 last house of the town of Cundiyo, toward the south,
24 continuing the same line until it reaches the highest point
25 of the mountain of Nambe; from thence, following the summit

1 of the mountain toward the north, until it reaches the
2 southern boundary of the county of Taos; this shall
3 constitute the eastern boundary, and on the north the
4 boundary of the county of Taos, and on the west the boundary
5 line of the territory."; and

6 WHEREAS, the location of the Puertecito de Pojoaque as a
7 landmark and continued knowledge of the Rebellion of
8 Rio Arriba are important to the identity of Rio Arribenos and
9 Rio Arriba history; and

10 WHEREAS, the Rebellion of Rio Arriba and the site of the
11 battle of Puertecito de Pojoaque, and the importance of these
12 events to New Mexico's history, have nearly become lost and
13 forgotten, and a project to improve United States highway
14 84-285 between Pojoaque and the Espanola valley has failed to
15 preserve this site or deem it worthy of commemoration;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that from this day forward the site of
18 the battle of Puertecito de Pojoaque will be preserved for
19 posterity and will be marked by an official historic marker;
20 and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following text be sent
22 to the historic preservation division of the cultural affairs
23 department for the consideration of the cultural properties
24 review committee, the statutory commission charged with
25 approving official historic marker text:

1 "Battle of Puertecito de Pojoaque 27 January 1838
2 Puertecito means "little pass". The area extending one mile
3 to the south and to the north of this site was the scene of a
4 battle when the citizens of the Rio Arriba country, in
5 New Mexico, then a department of Mexico, rebelled against the
6 Mexican government over taxes and liberty. Governor Manuel
7 Armijo and the Mexican army defeated factions of Tewa and
8 Hispano revolutionaries led by Antonio "El Coyote" Vigil and
9 interim Governor Jose Gonzales."; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
11 transmitted to the historic preservation division of the
12 cultural affairs department, the state historian and the
13 governor. _____

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s/Diane D. Denish

Diane D. Denish, President
Senate

s/Lenore M. Naranjo

Lenore M. Naranjo, Chief Clerk
Senate

s/Ben Lujan

Ben Lujan, Speaker
House of Representatives

s/Stephen R. Arias

Stephen R. Arias, Chief Clerk
House of Representatives