

HOUSE MEMORIAL 115

**53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017**

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO CONVENE A NATIVE AMERICAN  
VOTING INFORMATION TASK FORCE.

WHEREAS, Native Americans are a diverse demographic, with various languages and cultural distinctions defining each tribe; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans make up just one and seven-tenths percent of the United States population, but in New Mexico, Native Americans comprise ten and six-tenths percent of the population; and

WHEREAS, as a voting block, Native Americans were the last group in the United States to get the right to vote, and American Indians are the only ethnicity that the United States census bureau does not track when it comes to election data, according to public broadcasting service data; and

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1           WHEREAS, New Mexico Native Americans were barred from  
2 voting until 1948, when Miguel Trujillo of the Pueblo of Isleta  
3 won a federal lawsuit to secure the right to vote for all New  
4 Mexico Native Americans; and

5           WHEREAS, historically, Native Americans have some of the  
6 lowest voter turnout rates of any ethnic group in the country;  
7 and

8           WHEREAS, information regarding Native American voting  
9 education and information is lacking in New Mexico; and

10           WHEREAS, problems hindering New Mexico Native Americans  
11 from voting cannot be addressed without adequate information  
12 about the problems facing these voters; and

13           WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study what voter  
14 education efforts and information are provided to New Mexico  
15 Native Americans; and

16           WHEREAS, efforts to prohibit voting disenfranchisement in  
17 Native American communities and a review of the precincts,  
18 voting locations and voting requirements affecting New Mexico  
19 Native American voters would provide valuable information; and

20           WHEREAS, information about ways to engage tribal members  
21 in voting in federal, state, county and local elections could  
22 assist the secretary of state in future elections;

23           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
24 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary  
25 of state be requested to convene a Native American voting

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1 information task force; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Native American voting  
3 information task force be made up of five members, appointed by  
4 the secretary of state, to include a member of the Navajo  
5 Nation, a member of the Jicarilla Apache Nation, a member of  
6 the Mescalero Apache Tribe, a member of a pueblo and a Native  
7 American who resides in an urban area; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Native American voting  
9 information task force be requested to gather information and  
10 make findings and recommendations in the following areas:

11 A. Native American voting education efforts and  
12 problems facing voters;

13 B. efforts to prohibit voting disenfranchisement in  
14 Native American communities and a review of precincts, voting  
15 locations and voting requirements affecting New Mexico Native  
16 American voters; and

17 C. ways to engage tribal members in voting in  
18 federal, state, county and local elections; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Native American voting  
20 information task force be requested to report its findings and  
21 recommendations to the appropriate interim committee by October  
22 1, 2017; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
24 transmitted to the secretary of state, the secretary of Indian  
25 affairs, the twenty-three federally recognized Native American

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1 tribes of New Mexico, the offices of New Mexico's county clerks  
2 and each member of the New Mexico congressional delegation.

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