

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 12

2 **56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2023**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 EXPRESSING THE SORROW OF THE LEGISLATURE AT THE PASSING OF  
12 FORMER REPRESENTATIVE J. PAUL TAYLOR, THE "CONSCIENCE OF THE  
13 LEGISLATURE".

14  
15 WHEREAS, John Paul Taylor y Romero was born in Chamberino  
16 on August 24, 1920 and departed from this world on February 12,  
17 2023, surrounded by his family and caregivers; and

18 WHEREAS, born a little after World War I, in his one  
19 hundred two years, J. Paul Taylor lived through some of the  
20 most significant and pivotal times in modern American history,  
21 including the Great Depression and World War II, both of which  
22 shaped what has become known as the greatest generation; the  
23 Manhattan project; the space race with Russia and Neil  
24 Armstrong's walk on the moon; the assassinations of John and  
25 Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.; the enactment of the

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1 federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and federal Voting Rights Act  
2 of 1965; the right of American Indians to vote in New Mexico;  
3 the Vietnam conflict; *perestroika*; both the building and the  
4 destruction of the Berlin wall; the North American Free Trade  
5 Agreement; the dawning of the information age; New Mexico's  
6 *quartocentenario*; and September 11, 2001, when the world  
7 changed; and

8 WHEREAS, descended on his mother's side from Juan de  
9 Cabeza de Vaca, a soldier who came to what is now New Mexico  
10 with Coronado in 1540, J. Paul Taylor had an abiding love for  
11 history; and

12 WHEREAS, he was quoted in a newspaper article as saying,  
13 "I was always interested in history. From the fifth grade, I  
14 knew I wanted to be a history teacher."; and

15 WHEREAS, he earned his degree in history from what is now  
16 New Mexico state university and, after the war, worked for the  
17 Las Cruces public school district as a teacher, principal and  
18 administrator for more than thirty years; and

19 WHEREAS, J. Paul, as he was affectionately known in the  
20 roundhouse, served house district 33 in Dona Ana county from  
21 1987 to 2005 and served on multiple health and human service  
22 interim and standing committees during his eighteen-year  
23 career, as well as education, voters and elections and twelve  
24 years on house appropriations and finance, where he fought for  
25 people-focused budgets; and

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1           WHEREAS, J. Paul was the embodiment of Rooseveltian  
2 democratic ideals and was a tireless advocate for those less  
3 fortunate, particularly children and seniors; and

4           WHEREAS, he earned the sobriquet "the conscience of the  
5 legislature" for his unwavering commitment to social justice;  
6 and

7           WHEREAS, another of his passions was New Mexico's cultural  
8 history; in 2004, as chair of the 2003 reorganization  
9 committee, he shepherded through the legislature the elevation  
10 of the office of cultural affairs to the cabinet-level cultural  
11 affairs department, along with three other departments: aging  
12 and long-term services, veterans' services and Indian affairs;  
13 and

14           WHEREAS, as a man who dedicated his long life to public  
15 service, his accolades, awards and honors are too long to  
16 catalog in a memorial, but they included legislator of the  
17 year, legislator of the decade and similar awards in 1989,  
18 1991, 1992, 1996, 1998 and 2002; he received an honorary  
19 doctorate from New Mexico state university in 1985 for his  
20 "...exemplary service as an educator, civic leader, Hispanic  
21 historian, architectural conservationist, antiquarian and  
22 builder of libraries in his native New Mexico; and for his  
23 unselfish and visionary leadership to education, museums, and  
24 diverse other public institutions..."; and he may be the  
25 legislator most lauded by his peers, as they have passed at

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1 least four memorials recognizing and praising him; and

2 WHEREAS, like his awards, his service on myriad boards and  
3 commissions is also too lengthy to list, but in addition to  
4 serving on the board of regents of the museum of New Mexico,  
5 the board of trustees of the national Hispanic cultural center  
6 and the Branigan center in Las Cruces, he served on numerous  
7 other historical, arts, charitable and civic organizations; and

8 WHEREAS, the state's J. Paul Taylor juvenile detention  
9 center, New Mexico state university's J. Paul Taylor social  
10 justice symposium and the charter school J. Paul Taylor academy  
11 have been named in his honor; and

12 WHEREAS, the generosity of J. Paul and his beloved wife,  
13 Mary Daniels Taylor, has no better example than when they, with  
14 their family's support, decided to give one final magnificent  
15 gift to the people of the state they loved. The Taylors  
16 donated their national historic home and property in Mesilla  
17 and their Spanish colonial, Mexican and New Mexican art  
18 collections to the cultural affairs department to be a  
19 permanent cultural monument and historic site; and

20 WHEREAS, Representative J. Paul Taylor will be remembered  
21 in the New Mexico legislature as a statesman and a gracious and  
22 honorable gentleman, un gran caballero, and it is the  
23 legislature's fervent hope that New Mexicans for generations to  
24 come will visit Mesilla and the Taylor Reynolds Barela Mesilla  
25 historic site and know how this extraordinary citizen served

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1 his state with unparalleled dedication and distinction;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
3 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it officially and personally mourn the  
4 passing of the great gentleman from Dona Ana county and that it  
5 express its sorrow, heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolences  
6 to the family members of Representative J. Paul Taylor on the  
7 passing of their father, grandfather and great-grandfather and  
8 to his loving caregivers and friends; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature express its  
10 sympathy and condolences to the community members of Mesilla  
11 who have lost not just a loved and honored citizen, but someone  
12 who has been a presence throughout most, if not all, of their  
13 lives; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
15 transmitted to the family of the Honorable J. Paul Taylor.