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SENATE MEMORIAL 44

**54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2020**

INTRODUCED BY

Antoinette Sedillo Lopez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE OFFICE ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS TO RE-CREATE THE "400 YEARS OF FREEDOM, RESTRICTIONS AND SURVIVAL" EXHIBITION IN VARIOUS ART AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS THROUGHOUT NEW MEXICO TO EDUCATE STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS ABOUT THE COMPLICATED HISTORY OF SLAVERY AND FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES, THE SOUTHWEST AND NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, in 1539, Esteban, a person of African descent, led Spanish explorers through New Mexico and arrived at the Zuni village of Hawikku in western New Mexico near the Arizona border; and

WHEREAS, in 1619, approximately twenty Africans arrived in Virginia to permanently settle in the American colonies; and

WHEREAS, slavery has been a complex subject to teach in schools because of many misunderstandings about how the

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1 institution developed as a legal construct; and

2 WHEREAS, the institution of slavery existed in New Mexico  
3 and the Southwest, where many people of color were ensnared in  
4 its grasp; and

5 WHEREAS, many people of color, including people of  
6 African, Hispanic and Indian descent, were lynched in the  
7 Southwest during the years following the Civil War; and

8 WHEREAS, in 2019, Sherri Burr, university of New Mexico  
9 emeritus professor of law, published *Complicated Lives: Free*  
10 *Blacks in Virginia 1619-1865*; and

11 WHEREAS, on August 3, 2019, the exhibition "400 Years of  
12 Freedom, Restrictions and Survival" launched the eleventh  
13 anniversary celebration of the Sheryl Williams Stapleton  
14 African American performing arts center and exhibit hall and  
15 New Mexico's commemoration of the arrival of the first Africans  
16 to permanently settle in the United States;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
18 OF NEW MEXICO that the office on African American affairs be  
19 requested to re-create the "400 Years of Freedom, Restrictions  
20 and Survival" exhibition in various art and cultural  
21 institutions throughout New Mexico to educate students and  
22 residents about the complicated history of slavery and freedom  
23 in the United States, the Southwest and New Mexico; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
25 transmitted to the governor, the executive director of the

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1 office on African American affairs, the secretary of public  
2 education, the secretary of higher education and the secretary  
3 of cultural affairs.

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