

Second Regular Session
Seventy-second General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Valdez A., Benavidez, Buentello, Caraveo, Duran, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Jaquez Lewis, Tipper, Valdez D.

House Committees

HOUSE MEMORIAL 20-1002

101 **MEMORIALIZING FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF**
102 **REPRESENTATIVES RUBEN VALDEZ.**

1 WHEREAS, Our beloved former colleague, Ruben Valdez,
2 departed this life on October 1, 2019, at the age of 82; and

3 WHEREAS, Speaker Valdez was born and raised in Trinidad,
4 Colorado, and was the youngest of nine children; and

5 WHEREAS, When Speaker Valdez was only nine years old, his
6 father died, and when he was 15, he left school to take a job at the Pueblo
7 brickyard to help support his mother and family; and

8 WHEREAS, As a young adult, Speaker Valdez joined the United
9 Steelworkers of America, rising through the ranks and eventually
10 becoming president of Steelworkers Local 5099 in Denver; and

11 WHEREAS, Speaker Valdez returned to school and earned his
12 high school diploma through a GED program, and he later became the
13 first member of his family to graduate from college, earning his
14 Bachelor's Degree in Political Science at age 37 from Loretto Heights

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 College while serving in the General Assembly; and

2 WHEREAS, In 1970, Speaker Valdez was elected to the Colorado
3 House of Representatives, representing Denver, and five years later, when
4 Democrats took control of the House of Representatives in the wake of
5 the Watergate scandal, he became Speaker of the House; and

6 WHEREAS, Speaker Valdez was known for working across party
7 lines and across generations, and in 1975, he worked on a bill to promote
8 bilingual and bicultural education in public schools, which led The
9 Denver Post to run an article praising his efforts and ability to collaborate
10 with others; and

11 WHEREAS, After leaving the House, Speaker Valdez served as
12 Secretarial Representative for United States Department of Transportation
13 Region 8, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Social
14 Services (now the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing), and
15 Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Labor and
16 Employment, and he also remained active in politics, working as a
17 lobbyist with his granddaughter; and

18 WHEREAS, Speaker Valdez was a major presence in Democratic
19 politics for decades, working for Jimmy Carter, Dick Lamm, Ken Salazar,
20 Bill Ritter, and Michael Bennet, among others; and

21 WHEREAS, He was a strong advocate for workers, consumer
22 protections, and equity in education, and Denver Public Schools honored
23 him in 2015 by naming a school off West Evans Avenue after him; and

24 WHEREAS, Speaker Valdez was the first Latino House Speaker,
25 and Colorado did not see another Latino House Speaker until 2017; and

26 WHEREAS, Speaker Valdez was well respected throughout the
27 capitol and his presence will be greatly missed; now, therefore,

28 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
29 *Seventy-second General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

30 That, in the death of Ruben Valdez, the people of Colorado have
31 lost a dedicated public servant and outstanding citizen, and that we, the
32 members of the House of Representatives, do hereby extend our deep and
33 heartfelt sympathy to the members of his family and pay tribute to a man

1 who served the state well and faithfully.

2 *Be It Further Resolved*, That a copy of this Memorial be sent to his
3 granddaughter, Amber Valdez.