



## **HOUSE MEMORIAL 20-1002**

**BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Valdez A., Benavidez, Buentello, Caraveo, Duran, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Jaquez Lewis, Tipper, Valdez D., Arndt, Baisley, Becker, Bird, Bockenfeld, Buck, Buckner, Carver, Catlin, Coleman, Cutter, Esgar, Exum, Froelich, Garnett, Geitner, Gray, Herod, Holtorf, Hooton, Humphrey, Jackson, Kennedy, Kipp, Kraft-Tharp, Landgraf, Larson, Liston, Lontine, McCluskie, McKean, McLachlan, Melton, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Neville, Pelton, Ransom, Rich, Roberts, Saine, Sandridge, Singer, Sirota, Snyder, Soper, Sullivan, Titone, Van Winkle, Weissman, Will, Williams D., Wilson, Young.**

### **MEMORIALIZING FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RUBEN VALDEZ.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That, in the death of Ruben Valdez, the people of Colorado have lost a dedicated public servant and outstanding citizen, and that we, the members of the House of Representatives, do hereby extend our deep and heartfelt sympathy to the members of his family and pay tribute to a man who served the state well and faithfully.

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

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Robin Jones  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

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KC Becker  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES