



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Howie Morales
Lieutenant Governor

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

Wendell Chino Building, 2nd Floor
1220 S. St. Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone (505) 476-1600
Fax (505) 476-1601
www.iad.state.nm.us



Lynn Trujillo
Cabinet Secretary

Nadine Padilla
Deputy Cabinet Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 24, 2019**

New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, Native American Legislative Caucus and All Pueblo Council of Governors leadership issues statements on the passing of Senator John Pinto

SANTA FE – It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Senator John Pinto. Today we offer our condolences to his family, friends and to the Navajo Nation. The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, the New Mexico Native American caucus and the leadership of the All Pueblo Council of Governors issues the following statements on the passing of the honorable Senator.

Cabinet Secretary Lynn Trujillo, Indian Affairs Department:

“Today we mourn the passing of our Senator, our cheii, our friend, John Pinto. This man, this giant of the Senate, touched the lives of thousands of New Mexicans over his long career. Across the span of his life he served honorably in the United States Marine Corps as a Navajo Code Talker, and for over 40 years he was an unwavering champion for Native communities in the New Mexico Senate. I will never forget the story of how he as a freshman legislator hitchhiked from his home on the Navajo reservation all the way to the capitol in Santa Fe to attend the New Mexico legislature. It is that humility, work-ethic and commitment to service that stands as his legacy. It is an honor to have worked with the honorable Senator. We offer our deepest condolences to his family, his friends and to the Navajo people.”

Chairman E. Paul Torres, All Pueblo Council of Governors:

“On behalf of the All Pueblo Council of Governors I offer my heartfelt condolences and prayers for the family and friends of Senator John Pinto. He dedicated his life to elevating the voices of our tribal nations and worked tirelessly to improve the lives of people in our state. We are grateful for his service to our Native communities, to the state of New Mexico and to our Nation.”

Service · Respect · Community

Representative Arthur Allison:

“My friend and my big brother Senator John Pinto returned home today. He will be greatly missed, and I offer my deepest condolences to his family. For years this great leader was a champion for the needs of Native people and the people of New Mexico. As we mourn the loss of the Senator let us all challenge ourselves to live up to his legacy of public service.”

Representative Doreen Johnson:

“With a heavy heart I offer my prayers and condolences to the family of Senator John Pinto. This great man served our country with honor and distinction as a Navajo Code Talker during World War II. When he returned home, he recommitted himself to the task of improving the lives of our Navajo people and for people of all walks of life. I am grateful for my time with him and for having had the opportunity to work alongside him in the New Mexico legislature. Earlier this year, he was at last able to fully fund the Navajo Code Talkers Museum and I was honored to work with him on this effort. He leaves behind a legacy of integrity and public service that we will all strive to carry on.”

Representative Derrick J. Lente:

“New Mexico and our Nation lost a juggernaut today. After decades of selfless service to the people of New Mexico, Senator Pinto’s presence will undoubtedly be missed. As Senator Pinto’s colleague and a fellow Native American legislator, I thank him for all of his tireless work on behalf of Native Americans across our State and pledge to continue the efforts in his honor.”

Representative Georgene Louis:

“I am grateful for having known and worked with the great Senator John Pinto. I considered him my colleague, my mentor and my friend. While we have lost a giant of the New Mexico legislature his memory will continue to bless us and guide our work to advocate for all New Mexicans. We are grateful for his life and will always cherish his memory.”

Senator Benny Shendo:

“Today we lost one of our great leaders. My friend and colleague John Pinto exemplified the best traditions of the New Mexico senate and was what I consider a true servant-leader. For over 40 years he served the people of New Mexico in the Legislature, but he never forgot where he came from. His dedication to our Native communities never faltered and because of that we are forever indebted to him. I’m grateful for having known the Senator and I offer my prayers on his journey home.”

###

Service · Respect · Community