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HOUSE MEMORIAL 57

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

William A. Hall II and Patricia A. Lundstrom

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING A DESIGNEE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW MEXICO LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF TRAINING FOR THE NEW MEXICO LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY AND A DESIGNEE OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION TO COLLABORATE AND STUDY THE ISSUES REGARDING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF NEW MEXICO LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY INSTRUCTORS AND PROVIDE A CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATION TO THE LEGISLATIVE INTERIM COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH REVIEWING MATTERS RELATED TO INVESTMENTS AND PENSIONS.

WHEREAS, the New Mexico law enforcement academy was established by the legislature in 1969 as the "police academy", later changing the name to the "New Mexico law enforcement academy" in 1970; and

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1 WHEREAS, law enforcement in New Mexico is working under
2 the president's task force on 21st century policing, whose
3 mandate was to identify best policing practices and offer
4 recommendations on how those practices can promote effective
5 crime reduction while building public trust; and

6 WHEREAS, inherent to best practices in policing is high-
7 quality training and standards; and

8 WHEREAS, with the best practices mandate top of mind, the
9 New Mexico law enforcement academy is expected by New Mexico's
10 chiefs of police and sheriffs to provide cutting-edge training
11 for officers and law enforcement staff, and providing cutting-
12 edge training requires subject matter experts who are
13 experienced and committed to the mission; and

14 WHEREAS, the New Mexico law enforcement academy
15 instructors are certified police officers, ideally with several
16 years of experience coupled with instructor credentialing in
17 critical areas of high-risk and technical instruction; and

18 WHEREAS, the desired target instructor applicants are
19 officers with experience who are currently employed at various
20 law enforcement agencies throughout the state, and those
21 officers are covered under the public employees retirement
22 association's municipal police member coverage plan five, which
23 allows for enhanced retirement with twenty years of service;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, it is a nearly insurmountable obstacle for the

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1 New Mexico law enforcement academy to attract the ideal
2 officers to fill instructor positions since those officers
3 would be leaving a municipal law enforcement position for which
4 they are eligible to retire after twenty years to become an
5 instructor at the New Mexico law enforcement academy and be
6 covered by a retirement plan requiring twenty-five years of
7 service to retire with a comparable retirement benefit; and

8 WHEREAS, the New Mexico law enforcement academy is
9 powerless to equalize academy instructors' retirement
10 eligibility requirements with those of their municipal law
11 enforcement counterparts because current law requires that
12 academy instructors, regardless of years of experience and
13 specialized credentials, when hired by the academy, be moved
14 from the enhanced twenty-year retirement plan to the state
15 general member coverage plan three, which requires twenty-five
16 years of service before the officer can retire with a
17 comparable retirement benefit as provided under the municipal
18 police member coverage plan five; and

19 WHEREAS, requiring five additional years of service for an
20 officer to retire in order to receive a benefit comparable to
21 an officer working five fewer years presents a harsh and
22 significant barrier to instructor recruitment, and even
23 officers who are not planning to retire are understandably
24 reluctant to accept a position for which they would have to
25 give up the enhanced retirement option; and

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1 WHEREAS, although positions for instructors have been
2 posted multiple times, the New Mexico law enforcement academy
3 remains only forty percent staffed in the instructor role; and

4 WHEREAS, the New Mexico law enforcement academy is
5 committed to retaining the highest level of expectations in the
6 hiring of instructors, but without offering qualified
7 candidates a retirement level playing field, the academy simply
8 cannot compete with law enforcement agencies statewide; and

9 WHEREAS, even though the New Mexico law enforcement
10 academy is the state's lead training academy relied upon by
11 county and municipal training academies, once officers who
12 would otherwise accept a New Mexico law enforcement academy
13 instructor position become aware of the five-year difference in
14 retirement eligibility, the officers do not apply; and

15 WHEREAS, unfortunately, the primary recruitment obstacle
16 for the New Mexico law enforcement academy is also the primary
17 retention obstacle because current academy instructors would
18 benefit by returning to local law enforcement agencies so as to
19 regain eligibility for twenty-year retirement, and this fact
20 has repeatedly played out as the reason that highly
21 credentialed instructors have left the academy for employment
22 at other law enforcement agencies; and

23 WHEREAS, solution-focused discussions with collaboration
24 among key stakeholders and policymakers for resolution of the
25 issues surrounding recruitment and retention of New Mexico law

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1 enforcement academy instructors is a matter of significant
2 importance to the overall policing strategies and capabilities
3 of the state;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a designee of
6 the department of public safety, the director of the New Mexico
7 law enforcement academy, the deputy director of training for
8 the New Mexico law enforcement academy and a designee of the
9 public employees retirement association be requested to
10 collaborate and study the issues regarding the recruitment and
11 retention of law enforcement academy instructors and, through a
12 consensus, make a recommendation during the upcoming interim,
13 no later than September 15, 2025, to the legislative interim
14 committee charged with reviewing matters related to investments
15 and pensions; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
17 transmitted to the governor, the New Mexico legislative
18 council, the secretary of public safety, the director of the
19 New Mexico law enforcement academy and the executive director
20 of the public employees retirement association.

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