

Summary

Senate Memorial 5 creates a taskforce, convened by LFC, to make recommendations about improvements to the state’s child welfare system. The Memorial notes the taskforce is to be comprised of 12 members, six of which are appointed by a variety of elected officials and stakeholders. The taskforce is charged with examining the state’s child welfare and juvenile justice systems and making recommendations by November 2024. Listed below are appointed and recommended members of Senate Memorial 5 taskforce.

Role	Name	Background
Governor appointment	Secretary Teresa Casados	Teresa Casados is the Cabinet Secretary of the Children, Youth and Families Department. Prior to her role as Secretary, she was the Chief Operating Officer for the Office of the Governor. Within the Bill Richardson administration, Secretary Casados served as the Director of Operations and Human Resources and as the Deputy Chief of Staff.
Speaker of the House appointment	Representative Eleanor Chavez	Representative Eleanor Chavez represents the 26 th House district in New Mexico in Bernalillo County. Representative Chavez holds a BA in Social Work from the University of Washington and an MSW from the University of Washington School of Social Work. Representative Chavez has served on the New Mexico Public Education Commission and has served as the Director of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees. Representative Chavez chairs the House Enrolling and Engrossing Committee and is a member of the House Health and Human Services Committee, House Labor, Veterans’ and Military Affairs Committee and the interim Legislative Health and Human Services Committee.
House Minority Floor Leader appointment	Barbara Tedrow	Barbara Tedrow is the owner of the Gold Star Academy and Child Development Center, Smiling Faces Child Care Center, and F.A.C.E.S First Home Visiting Programs. She lives in San Juan County, and she serves on the state’s Early Childhood Education and Care Department Advisory Council.
Senate President Pro Tempore appointment	Senator Linda Lopez	Senator Linda Lopez represents the 11 th Senate district in New Mexico in Bernalillo County. Senator Lopez earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree in business administration from the College of Santa Fe. Senator Lopez sponsored Senate Memorial 5 and is a member of the Senate Tax, Business, and Transportation Committee and several interim committees, including the Indian Affairs Committee, and the Rules Committee. Senator Lopez is an advisory member of the Legislative Education Study Committee, the Courts, Corrections, and Justice Committee, the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee, and the Water and Natural Resources Committee.
Senate Minority Leader appointment	Maralyn Beck	Maralyn Beck is the Founder and CEO of the New Mexico Child First Network, which aims to improve foster care and the child welfare system in New Mexico. The organization provides resources, services, support, and training for foster parents. Beck is a former foster parent and has fostered more than 39 children, aging from newborn to 17, Maralyn holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of New Mexico and graduate degree from George Washington University.
Supreme Court Justice appointment	Honorable Emilio Chavez	The Honorable Emilio Chavez is the Chief Judge of the Eighth Judicial District Court, which covers Colfax County, Taos County, and Union County. Justice Chavez was appointed to Eighth Judicial District Court in 2015, following a career as a prosecutor in Taos. Justice Chavez was born and raised in Albuquerque and earned a BA in economics from Grinnell College and J.D. from UNM School of Law.
Representative from the <i>Kevin S.</i> settlement	Jesse Clifton	Jesse Clifton is an attorney with Disability Rights New Mexico, which represented plaintiffs in the <i>Kevin S.</i> lawsuit and settlement. The <i>Kevin S.</i> Settlement was agreed upon in March 2020 in response to a lawsuit brought by 13 children in the New Mexico foster care system, Disability Rights New Mexico, and the Native American Disability Law Center. The <i>Kevin S.</i> Settlement requires the state to provide a trauma-informed system of care for children involved in the child welfare system. Jesse has also been involved in the implementation of settlement recommendations within a pilot program in Dona Ana County.

Service provider	Robert Chavez	Robert Chavez is the CEO of YDI, a non-profit working to address poverty in New Mexico by providing early childhood education and home visiting programs, prenatal care, job training and employment assistance, and behavioral health services in 15 New Mexico counties. Robert is also the former COO of the New Mexico State Board of Nursing, former co-division director of the New Mexico Human Services Department's Behavioral Health Services Division, and former Deputy Director of the Income Support Division of the Human Services Department. Robert holds an MA and BS from the University of Phoenix, and he is a former foster parent.
Foster family representative	Nicholas D. Natividad, Ph.D	Nicholas Natividad and his family have served as foster parents and are engaging in a pilot project focused on improving the child welfare system in Dona Ana County, connected to the implementation of <i>Kevin S.</i> . In his professional work, Dr. Natividad is an Associate Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at New Mexico State University. His teaching and research interests focus on civil and human rights.
Youth representative	Mia Calle	Mia's family immigrated to the United States from South America, and her family interacted with the child welfare system at several different points in her life. She has dedicated her personal and professional life to helping young people. Mia is interested in sharing more about her lived experience interacting with CYFD and serving as a bridge between the youth impacted by the child welfare system and the state. Mia is an active youth leader with NMCAN and has spoken on several panels about child poverty and cultural awareness, and she works as a coordinator with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central New Mexico.
Juvenile justice stakeholder	Nick Costales	Nick Costales retired after leading CYFD's Juvenile Justice Services Division. Under Nick's leadership, New Mexico implemented the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). Grounded in national research and supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the JDAI seeks to improve public safety, reduce reliance on secure confinement of youth, reduce disparities and biases within the juvenile justice system, save taxpayer dollars, and improve outcomes for youth engaged in the juvenile justice system. LFC reports have highlighted the implementation of juvenile justice reforms as a model for the implementation of evidence-based reform efforts in New Mexico. Nick also served on the executive board of the New Mexico Gang Taskforce and holds a BA in Criminal Justice from the University of New Mexico.
Tribal Member with ICWA lived-experience	Yazh Elliot Pending	Yazh is a young adult with lived experience in the foster care system. They live in Bernalillo County and are an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation and are affiliated with the Jicarilla Apache. Yazh Elliot is an artist and leader with NMCAN, an organization that partners with young people to build community and lead change among young people impacted by the foster care and juvenile justice systems.
At-large representative	Dr. Carol Wilson Spigner	Dr. Carol Spigner is a professor in the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice who lives in Albuquerque. Dr. Spigner was previously the Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration of Children and Families, where she was responsible for overseeing all federal child welfare programs. She has also served on the Pew Commission for Children in Foster Care, the Mayor's Child Welfare Review Panel for the City of Philadelphia, and the Workgroup for the Michigan Racial Equity Task Force. Dr. Spigner began her career working in the field as a probation officer and child welfare worker in Los Angeles. Dr. Spigner holds a DSW and MSW from the University of Southern California.