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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 10  
**51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2014**

INTRODUCED BY  
Jacob R. Candelaria

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL  
REQUESTING THE CREATION OF A TASK FORCE TO ASSESS THE ROLE OF  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN REDUCING OBESITY IN  
CHILDREN AND TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR INCREASED WEEKLY INSTRUCTION  
TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S FITNESS.

WHEREAS, obesity rates in the United States have more than  
doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the past  
thirty years; and

WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and  
prevention reported that, in 2010, one-third of children and  
adolescents in the United States were overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, obese adolescents are more likely to suffer from  
prediabetes; and

WHEREAS, student data from the 2011 New Mexico youth risk  
and resiliency survey of high school students revealed that

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1 only twenty-eight and four-tenths percent of students attended  
2 physical education classes daily while twenty-seven and three-  
3 tenths percent of students were reported as being obese or  
4 overweight; and

5 WHEREAS, children and adolescents who are obese are likely  
6 to be obese as adults; and

7 WHEREAS, research has shown that people with poorer health  
8 in childhood are more likely to experience lower academic  
9 success in school, worse health and reduced employment and job  
10 satisfaction in adulthood; and

11 WHEREAS, physical inactivity increases the risk, in  
12 adulthood, of heart disease, colon and breast cancer, diabetes  
13 mellitus, hypertension, osteoporosis, anxiety and depression  
14 and other chronic diseases; and

15 WHEREAS, new studies have suggested that, in the global  
16 population, the mortality rate due to physical inactivity  
17 approaches that of cigarette smoking; and

18 WHEREAS, the substantial disease risk associated with  
19 physical inactivity has been described as a pandemic and is  
20 extremely expensive; and

21 WHEREAS, scientific evidence points to the positive impact  
22 of regular exercise on learning and decreasing obesity; and

23 WHEREAS, twenty-four states besides New Mexico have  
24 mandated minimum physical education units at specified, regular  
25 intervals as a measure to improve children's fitness, decrease

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1 obesity and increase attention to improve outcomes in the  
2 classroom; and

3 WHEREAS, the importance of physical education for children  
4 in elementary schools is reflected in its inclusion as a funded  
5 program unit in the Public School Finance Act; and

6 WHEREAS, the legislature and the public education  
7 department have prescribed physical education content with  
8 benchmarks and performance standards; and

9 WHEREAS, physical education is a required, instructional  
10 program in public schools in the state, and one unit of  
11 physical education is required for high school graduation; and

12 WHEREAS, classes within the school system provide a venue  
13 for children to receive regular physical education instruction  
14 and to learn potentially lifelong healthy habits; and

15 WHEREAS, the cost of failure to address obesity will lead  
16 to New Mexico residents having decreased buying power through  
17 decreased job attainment and accelerated costs of health care  
18 in response to morbidities associated with obesity;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study  
21 committee be requested to establish a task force to evaluate  
22 the feasibility of requiring one hundred fifty minutes of  
23 physical education per school week, per year, for all children  
24 in public elementary schools by licensed physical education  
25 instructors; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education  
2 study committee be requested to include on the task force  
3 representatives from elementary schools; the New Mexico  
4 association for health, physical education, recreation and  
5 dance; the New Mexico athletic directors association; the New  
6 Mexico coalition of school administrators; experts in exercise  
7 physiology; and health care professionals involved in the care  
8 of children with obesity, including the New Mexico pediatric  
9 society, physical therapists, occupational therapists and the  
10 New Mexico school nurses association, as well as  
11 representatives from the legislative education study committee;  
12 and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to  
14 review programs established in the twenty-four states that have  
15 mandated weekly multiple hours of physical education in  
16 elementary schools; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to  
18 develop a plan for the funding and implementation of weekly  
19 multi-hour mandatory physical education in elementary schools  
20 to begin at the start of the 2015-2016 school year; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force provide a  
22 report to the legislative education study committee by October  
23 1, 2014; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
25 transmitted to the chair of the legislative education study

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1 committee, the chair of the legislative finance committee and  
2 the secretary of public education.

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