

1 A MEMORIAL

2 CONGRATULATING FRANCES RAMIREZ-MAESTAS ON HER RETIREMENT FROM
3 THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE.

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5 WHEREAS, Frances Ramirez-Maestas, director of the
6 legislative education study committee, retired from state
7 government at the end of 2015; and

8 WHEREAS, she has been a fixture as legislative staff for
9 almost twenty years; in fact, she came the same year as
10 Senators Leavell, Lopez and Payne; and

11 WHEREAS, Frances became the director of the legislative
12 education study committee in 2008, after having served as
13 deputy director for eight years; and

14 WHEREAS, as a boss, Frances expected high-quality,
15 nonpartisan, objective work from her staff, and she expected
16 her staff to be responsive to committee members and other
17 legislators and legislative staff, regardless of party
18 affiliation; and

19 WHEREAS, she also recognized that her staff had lives
20 outside the office, and she tried whenever possible to give
21 them the time they needed when major life events intruded;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, she was always quick to defend her staff
24 against disrespect or mistreatment by lobbyists, other staff
25 members or even legislators; and

1 WHEREAS, anyone who knows Frances knows of her great
2 passion for public education, as well as her very
3 well-defined, deep-rooted sense of right and wrong; and

4 WHEREAS, Frances has always been eager to assist anyone
5 even remotely interested in public education and has been
6 just as eager to convert any nonbelievers; and

7 WHEREAS, Frances made it her mission, and her pleasure,
8 to tout the New Mexico legislature's foresight in creating
9 the only permanent joint legislative interim committee on
10 public education, and she made other states aware of this
11 legislative emphasis as well as the state's funding formula,
12 which was one of the first in the nation to be an equalized
13 state funding formula based on equity and fairness; and

14 WHEREAS, she was not just part of the staff of the
15 2005-2008 funding formula study task force, but a vital
16 resource and source of institutional memory during that study
17 of public school funding in New Mexico and the development of
18 a new, simpler funding formula; and

19 WHEREAS, she served with distinction on several national
20 education committees, including the national conference of
21 state legislatures, where she served as chairwoman of the
22 education staff section; and

23 WHEREAS, she was instrumental in setting up the
24 legislative education staff network, a partnership between
25 the national conference of state legislatures and the

1 education commission of the states, that serves as a research
2 tool through which any legislative staff member in any state
3 can post a query and have it answered by counterparts
4 throughout the country; and

5 WHEREAS, Frances' many years of dedication to public
6 education and education policy has been recognized nationally
7 by the national conference of state legislatures, the
8 education commission of the states and the legislative
9 education staff network and in-state by the New Mexico
10 coalition of school administrators, which awarded her the
11 Earl Nunn memorial award in 2012; and

12 WHEREAS, for one award, her staff noted as one of her
13 accomplishments that she "consistently supports public
14 education by insisting that schools, school districts and the
15 public education department adhere to the requirements of
16 law; opposes unfair or unwarranted assaults on schools,
17 whether fiscal or programmatic; and reminds all involved that
18 whatever is done must benefit children first"; and

19 WHEREAS, before those important awards, and others, came
20 to her, it is important to note that Frances Ramirez was
21 Las Cruces Junior LULAC Girl of the Year in 1966 and 1967,
22 New Mexico-Texas State LULAC Girl of the Year in 1967 and, at
23 the national convention in Phoenix, Arizona, was selected as
24 the 1967 National LULAC Girl of the Year; and

25 WHEREAS, Frances is very proud of her Isleta-Hispanic

1 familial roots, and she lives her life by the values she was
2 taught by her family and her religion; and

3 WHEREAS, Frances is also justifiably proud of all she
4 has accomplished for schoolchildren in New Mexico;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it notes its appreciation of the
7 many years of service provided to the legislature by
8 Frances Ramirez-Maestas in helping to shape New Mexico's
9 public education funding and programmatic policy and working
10 to ensure that the legislature's will was being implemented
11 and enforced and that the fiscal playing field for public
12 school funding was equitable and fair; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate extends its best
14 wishes to Frances for an enjoyable retirement. _____

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