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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO COLLECT CURRENT DATA ON THE STATUS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR INCREASED WEEKLY PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION.

WHEREAS, in 2015, the national center for health statistics reported that more than seventeen percent of children in the United States were obese, an increase of nearly two percent over a ten-year period; and

WHEREAS, research shows that people who are obese in childhood are far more likely to be obese in adulthood, thus increasing their risk for adverse health effects, such as heart disease and diabetes, and affecting their eligibility for employment in certain jobs; and

WHEREAS, the United States department of health and human services recommends that children and adolescents get at least sixty minutes of physical activity daily, which should include equal parts vigorous aerobic activity, muscle-strengthening activity and bone-strengthening activity; and

WHEREAS, student data from a 2011 New Mexico youth risk and resiliency survey of high school students reveal that only twenty-eight and one-half percent of students attend physical education classes daily; and

1 WHEREAS, the 2016 session of the New Mexico legislature
2 assembled a task force of experts in elementary education,
3 health and wellness and physical education pedagogy, as well
4 as members of the legislative education study committee, to
5 evaluate the feasibility of requiring a minimum of one
6 hundred fifty minutes of physical education per school week;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, the task force found that research indicates
9 that physical activity is a better approach than nutrition
10 alone in preventing obesity and type two diabetes in
11 children; and

12 WHEREAS, the task force also found that students who are
13 physically active tend to have better grades, attendance and
14 cognitive performance than students who are inactive because
15 exercise increases brain activity and improves memory; and

16 WHEREAS, state standards require elementary school
17 students to participate in physical education; and

18 WHEREAS, legislative education study committee staff
19 found that appropriations made in fiscal years 2007 and 2008
20 provided enough funding for only about one-half of the
21 elementary school programs in New Mexico and that
22 approximately twenty-two million dollars (\$22,000,000) would
23 be needed for full funding of elementary school physical
24 education programs statewide; and

25 WHEREAS, the development of an effective plan for

1 increasing weekly physical education in New Mexico public
2 schools continues to require specific information;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
4 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department and
5 the department of health be requested to work with the
6 legislative education study committee to answer essential
7 questions related to establishing an effective plan for
8 increased weekly physical education in the state's elementary
9 schools; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
11 department be requested to collect and report information to
12 the legislative education study committee about the frequency
13 of elementary school students' attendance in physical
14 education classes, distinguishing those that offer classes
15 daily, weekly or biweekly; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
17 department be requested to report information to the
18 legislative education study committee about the New Mexico
19 elementary schools that receive funding for physical
20 education and the amount of funding they receive; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
22 department and department of health be requested to report to
23 the legislative education study committee by November 1,
24 2017; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

1 transmitted to the secretaries of public education and health,
2 the chair of the legislative education study committee and the
3 director of the legislative education study committee. _____

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