

1 SENATE MEMORIAL 123

2 **53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Richard C. Martinez

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10 A MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT
12 FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND TO KEEP MORE
13 CHILDREN IN SAFE HOMES AND OUT OF FOSTER CARE.

14
15 WHEREAS, children are the most vulnerable members of
16 society and deserve to be loved, protected and nurtured; and

17 WHEREAS, the Annie E. Casey foundation's annual KIDS COUNT
18 report ranked New Mexico either last or next to last among the
19 fifty states in child well-being; and

20 WHEREAS, on any given day, two thousand five hundred
21 children need foster care in New Mexico, according the
22 children, youth and families department; and

23 WHEREAS, while foster care fills a vital role, families
24 can be strengthened by keeping children out of foster care and
25 placing them in the least-restrictive, most family-like setting

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1 appropriate to their needs and by reducing inappropriate group
2 home placements; and

3 WHEREAS, lawmakers are looking for ways to protect
4 children by focusing on the root of the problem and directing
5 resources to preventive services; and

6 WHEREAS, in June 2016, House Resolution 5456, the Family
7 First Prevention Services Act of 2016, was introduced in the
8 United States congress with bipartisan support; and

9 WHEREAS, the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016
10 strengthens families and reduces inappropriate foster care
11 placements by:

12 A. giving states flexibility to use federal foster
13 care dollars to provide up-front, evidence-based prevention
14 services, such as parent training and individual and family
15 therapy, to prevent inappropriate foster care placements and
16 improve outcomes for children and parents;

17 B. ensuring that more foster children are placed
18 with families by ending federal reimbursement when states
19 inappropriately place children in non-family settings, such as
20 group homes or congregate facilities;

21 C. keeping children safe by reauthorizing the
22 regional partnership grant program, which provides funding to
23 state and local evidence-based services aimed at preventing
24 child abuse and child neglect due to parental substance abuse;

25 D. reducing the amount of time foster children wait

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1 to be adopted or placed with relatives or foster parents across
2 state lines by encouraging states to replace their outdated
3 child placement systems with a more efficient electronic
4 system; and

5 E. supporting family members who unexpectedly
6 assume responsibility for a child by providing important
7 caregiver resources and eliminating unnecessary paperwork; and

8 WHEREAS, the congressional budget office preliminarily
9 estimates that the cost of up-front prevention services to
10 strengthen families would be more than fully offset by reducing
11 inappropriate group home placements and the short delay in
12 providing additional funding to states for adoption assistance
13 to allow the United States government accountability office
14 review to be completed; and

15 WHEREAS, over the long term, providing evidence-based
16 prevention services has been shown to reduce the need for
17 costly, long-term foster care and to improve outcomes for
18 children and families;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
20 OF NEW MEXICO that New Mexico's congressional delegation be
21 requested to support House Resolution 5456, the Family First
22 Prevention Services Act of 2016, for the benefit of New Mexico
23 children and families; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
25 transmitted to members of the New Mexico congressional

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