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SENATE MEMORIAL 69

**53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018**

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO CHARGE THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE WITH STUDYING FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING MORE CANDIDATES TO ENTER THE EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE.

WHEREAS, every child in New Mexico, birth through third grade, deserves high-quality early learning opportunities served by a highly qualified early learning workforce; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico was ranked forty-eighth in economic well-being and forty-ninth in child well-being in 2018 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, and New Mexico is challenged by the effects of poverty on children, as many children living in poverty enter kindergarten unprepared as compared with their more affluent peers; and

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1           WHEREAS, children who experience toxic stress, whether as  
2 the result of poverty, family instability, abuse or neglect or  
3 other adverse childhood experiences, can have impaired brain  
4 development, especially in the areas of the brain dedicated to  
5 higher-order skills; and

6           WHEREAS, high-quality early childhood education can reduce  
7 the developmental effects of poverty and childhood trauma by  
8 providing children with rich social experiences; and

9           WHEREAS, early childhood education teachers and the  
10 development of skills and competencies are predictive of  
11 childhood outcomes; and

12           WHEREAS, teacher preparation with specialization in early  
13 childhood development is related to positive outcomes for  
14 children; and

15           WHEREAS, the national conference of state legislatures'  
16 publication, *No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class*  
17 *Education System State by State*, found strong early learning  
18 educational systems have extra support for struggling students  
19 and that a bachelor's degree and, in some cases, a master's  
20 degree in early childhood education are required; and

21           WHEREAS, New Mexico does not require teachers in all  
22 state-funded pre-kindergarten classrooms to have a bachelor's  
23 degree that specializes in early childhood education and does  
24 not require teacher's assistants to have at least an  
25 associate's degree in child development or equivalent

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1 credential-based coursework; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico's early childhood education and care  
3 system begins prenatally, extends through age eight and spans  
4 several state agencies: the children, youth and families  
5 department; the department of health; the human services  
6 department; the higher education department; and the public  
7 education department; and

8 WHEREAS, despite declining revenues in fiscal years 2017  
9 and 2018, New Mexico has continued to prioritize funding for  
10 early childhood programs so that children enter kindergarten  
11 ready to learn, and the legislature has appropriated seven  
12 hundred sixty-two million dollars (\$762,000,000) in general  
13 fund revenue for early childhood programs since fiscal year  
14 2012;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
16 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council be  
17 requested to charge the legislative education study committee  
18 with studying funding sources to finance coursework and a  
19 bachelor's or associate's degree specializing in early  
20 childhood education as an incentive to expand New Mexico's  
21 highly qualified early learning workforce, including:

- 22 A. existing scholarships;
- 23 B. loan-for-service programs and loan repayment  
24 programs;
- 25 C. grants;

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- 1 D. tuition reimbursement;
- 2 E. other financial incentives; and
- 3 F. recruitment initiatives that other states are
- 4 implementing targeted specifically for the early childhood
- 5 workforce; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the higher education  
7 department; the public education department; the children,  
8 youth and families department; the department of health; and  
9 the human services department be requested to collaborate with  
10 the legislative education study committee as needed and to  
11 provide early childhood workforce qualification data; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
13 transmitted to the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative  
14 council; the secretary of higher education; the secretary of  
15 public education; the secretary of children, youth and  
16 families; the secretary of health; the secretary of human  
17 services; and the director of the legislative education study  
18 committee.