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HOUSE MEMORIAL 65

**54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2020**

INTRODUCED BY

William "Bill" R. Rehm and Georgene Louis and D. Wonda Johnson  
and Derrick J. Lente

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO STUDY THE  
FEASIBILITY OF A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDE INTERNET  
ACCESS ON SCHOOL BUSES TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.

WHEREAS, millions of students need access to the internet  
to complete assignments, but studies estimate that one in five  
students lack internet access in their homes; and

WHEREAS, this gap especially impacts low-income, rural and  
tribal students who must find other ways to get online to  
complete their homework, often working out of school parking  
lots late into the night or walking miles to find a reliable  
signal; and

WHEREAS, dubbed "the homework gap" by researchers,  
students without the use of reliable internet access at home  
find it harder to complete and submit homework assignments,

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1 further expanding the inequity already present in low-income  
2 communities; and

3 WHEREAS, the average school bus ride is twenty minutes  
4 each way, or forty minutes per day, and over the course of a  
5 year, students spend on average the equivalent of twenty  
6 instructional days riding buses back and forth from school to  
7 home; and

8 WHEREAS, students in rural school districts often face  
9 over three hours of travel time every single day; and

10 WHEREAS, additional time is spent on buses for  
11 extracurricular activities and field trips; and

12 WHEREAS, by having access to broadband on school buses  
13 carrying students to school or school-related activities,  
14 students could take advantage of otherwise lost hours on school  
15 buses each day; and

16 WHEREAS, by providing internet access on school buses,  
17 buses can become an extension of the classroom; and

18 WHEREAS, as students focus on schoolwork, disruptions on  
19 buses also decrease, and fewer disciplinary referrals by bus  
20 drivers translates to quieter school buses where drivers can  
21 focus on driving safely; and

22 WHEREAS, New Mexico children who ride school buses deserve  
23 the tools they need to succeed, and internet access on buses  
24 would help to ensure that no student is left behind in a  
25 digital world;

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