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HOUSE MEMORIAL 24

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

Eleanor Chávez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON SAFE STAFFING LEVELS AT THE CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT AND THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT.

WHEREAS, the corrections department and the children, youth and families department provide critical public safety services in this state; and

WHEREAS, the corrections department and the children, youth and families department must have adequate staffing levels to provide those critical services; and

WHEREAS, over the last decade, both the corrections department and the children, youth and families department have been significantly understaffed; and

WHEREAS, some correctional facilities have official

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1 vacancy rates for frontline correctional officer positions in
2 excess of thirty percent, which has led to more dangerous
3 staffing situations in correctional facilities; and

4 WHEREAS, several frontline positions at the children,
5 youth and families department have official vacancy rates in
6 excess of thirty percent, including child protective services
7 and juvenile justice facility positions; and

8 WHEREAS, it is difficult to fully evaluate the
9 understaffing situations at the corrections department and the
10 children, youth and families department because the departments
11 have eliminated many unfilled positions; and

12 WHEREAS, the children, youth and families department is
13 operating under the requirements of the *Kevin S.* settlement
14 agreement that necessitates adequate and safe staffing; and

15 WHEREAS, there has been a lack of opportunity for
16 frontline workers to provide input and perspective to shape
17 recruiting and retention policies at the corrections department
18 or the children, youth and families department; and

19 WHEREAS, ensuring the safety of the public is the most
20 essential role of state government;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
22 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative
23 finance committee be requested to create a task force to
24 generate a report that:

25 A. recommends safe and adequate staffing levels for

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1 all public safety positions at the corrections department and
2 the children, youth and families department;

3 B. analyzes current staffing levels at the
4 corrections department and the children, youth and families
5 department, including shift, post and job classification
6 details;

7 C. determines the reasons for current inadequate
8 staffing levels;

9 D. analyzes the efficacy of current recruiting and
10 retention strategies at the corrections department and the
11 children, youth and families department;

12 E. recommends actions that the executive branch
13 could take to remedy inadequate staffing levels; and

14 F. recommends legislation, including
15 appropriations, necessary to remedy inadequate staffing levels;
16 and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
18 consist of the following members:

19 A. a member from the state personnel office,
20 appointed by the director of the state personnel office, with
21 direct knowledge of the corrections department and the
22 children, youth and families department job classifications,
23 pay bands and hiring practices;

24 B. a member from the corrections department
25 appointed by the secretary of corrections;

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1 C. a member from the children, youth and families
2 department appointed by the secretary of children, youth and
3 families;

4 D. three members employed by the children, youth
5 and families department, including at least one member who
6 works in child protective services and at least one member who
7 is a correctional officer in a juvenile detention facility,
8 appointed by the executive director of the union representing
9 the largest number of employees at the corrections department
10 and the children, youth and families department;

11 E. one member employed at the union representing
12 the largest number of employees at the corrections department
13 and the children, youth and families department, appointed by
14 the executive director of that union;

15 F. two members, appointed by the speaker of the
16 house of representatives, who are state representatives;

17 G. one member, appointed by the minority leader of
18 the house of representatives, who is a state representative;

19 H. two members, appointed by the majority leader of
20 the senate, who are state senators; and

21 I. one member, appointed by the minority leader of
22 the senate, who is a state senator; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
24 meet monthly from May 2025 through November 2025 to develop and
25 finalize the report by December, 1 2025; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report developed pursuant
2 to this memorial be provided to the corrections department, the
3 children, youth and families department, the office of the
4 governor and the legislature; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report developed pursuant
6 to this memorial be made available to the public on the
7 legislature's website; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
9 transmitted to the corrections department, the children, youth
10 and families department, the office of the governor and each
11 member of the legislature.