

**44TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION,  
2000**

INTRODUCED BY  
Cynthia Nava

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO EXAMINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE  
ABSENCE OF SEX EDUCATION IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS  
AND THE HIGH TEEN PREGNANCY RATE IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, New Mexico had the third highest birth rate in  
the United States for females aged fifteen to seventeen in  
1995; and

WHEREAS, teen mothers are less likely to be employed,  
finish high school or attend college; and

WHEREAS, teen mothers are less likely to be able to  
obtain quality child care; and

WHEREAS, teen fathers earn two-thirds the income of  
males who delay parenting until after age twenty; and

WHEREAS, by age twenty-three only sixty-five percent of  
teen fathers have completed high school or earned a general

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1       equivalency diploma; and

2               WHEREAS, teenage parents are often unaware of the severe  
3       social and economic consequences of becoming parents at a  
4       young age; and

5               WHEREAS, age-appropriate courses in sexuality are not  
6       required in most school districts beyond sixth grade; and

7               WHEREAS, when health education is integrated into other  
8       courses, current rules do not require instructors to be  
9       certified in the health sciences; and

10              WHEREAS, community assessment surveys in Raton, Socorro,  
11       Carlsbad and Santa Fe find that between seventy and ninety-  
12       two percent of adults support comprehensive abstinence-based  
13       sex education in their schools beginning by the sixth grade;  
14       and

15              WHEREAS, over eighty-one percent of students surveyed by  
16       the mayor's youth advisory board in Las Cruces believe teen  
17       pregnancy is a problem in Las Cruces; and

18              WHEREAS, there may be a correlation between what  
19       students are taught in school and students' behavior; and

20              WHEREAS, states with low teen pregnancy rates may offer  
21       examples of programs that can reduce the prevalence of teen  
22       pregnancies;

23              NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
24       STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the  
25       state department of public education be requested to examine  
      the relationship between the absence of sex education in  
      middle school and high school, and the high teen pregnancy

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1 rate in New Mexico; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
3 transmitted to the secretary of health and the superintendent  
4 of public instruction.

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