## 46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003

INTRODUCED BY Allen V. Hurt

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 47

## A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO COLLABORATE ON A PLAN TO ADDRESS YOUTH PROBLEMS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico's youth face many challenges and obstacles to a healthy, economically satisfying lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has the highest rate of child poverty in the nation, with twenty-five percent of its children living in poverty, and with more than fifty percent of its families headed by a single mother with children under the age of five being considered poor; and

WHEREAS, children living in poverty are more likely to become pregnant or father a child, drop out of high school or become incarcerated; and

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WHEREAS, New Mexico has a large population of youth, with twenty-eight percent of its population under the age of twentyfive: and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a higher-than-average percentage of households that are considered "food insecure" or "hungry", and children in those households are more likely to perform poorly in school and, as a consequence, suffer from diminished chances of gaining good employment; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has the seventh highest rate of youth suicide in the nation: and

WHEREAS, New Mexico will not advance economically or socially if its children are not properly cared for, welleducated and healthy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the children, youth and families department, the department of health, the human services department and the state department of public education be requested to collaborate on a coordinated plan to address the problems of youth that occur early in children's lives and to present that plan to the appropriate interim committee of the legislature prior to December 1, 2003; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretaries of children, youth and families, health, and human services and to the superintendent of public instruction.

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