

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO STUDY VIRTUAL ANATOMY AS AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE TO ANIMAL DISSECTION TO FULFILL ACADEMIC CLASS REQUIREMENTS.

WHEREAS, anatomy is taught in New Mexico public schools as part of the science curriculum, and many anatomy classes require animal dissection as part of their course work; and

WHEREAS, many students oppose this harmful use of animals in the classroom on ethical and ecological grounds; and

WHEREAS, students who object to animal dissection and do not have the ability to learn via humane alternatives are often penalized by receiving a lower grade; and

WHEREAS, students in public schools should be able to exercise a choice in meeting academic class requirements with alternative methods to animal dissection; and

WHEREAS, the use of humane alternatives provides students freedom to practice at their own pace, to learn by trial and error and to repeat procedures without the high costs associated with using real animals; and

WHEREAS, there are health risks to teachers and students through exposure to formaldehyde, a known carcinogen, during animal dissection; and

WHEREAS, animal dissection requires that millions of

formaldehyde-soaked specimens be discarded, and the federal environmental protection agency has designated formaldehyde as a hazardous air pollutant, water pollutant and waste constituent, thereby posing a risk to the environment and public health; and

WHEREAS, there are four major loan libraries that currently provide schools with free alternatives to real animal dissection, allowing teachers to try out various alternatives before purchasing them for their schools; and

WHEREAS, virtual anatomy software, videos and models are often cheaper than the purchase of animals for a single year's practical courses and can be reused in subsequent years; and

WHEREAS, use of alternative methods is cost-effective and can save between two thousand seven hundred dollars (\$2,700) and nine thousand six hundred dollars (\$9,600) per classroom over a three-year period;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department study the use of virtual anatomy as an acceptable alternative method of study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study ensure that the academic class requirements requiring animal dissection can be fulfilled through virtual anatomy alternatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the public education department.