

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO STUDY CHILDHOOD OBESITY, INCLUDING NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND THE IMPACT OF FOODS AND BEVERAGES OFFERED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, obesity in children is a growing national problem and may be related to chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease; and

WHEREAS, the lack of adequate physical education and nutrition programs and the sale of low-nutrition foods and beverages in public schools may be contributing to childhood obesity; and

WHEREAS, according to the national center for health statistics, fifteen percent of children between the ages of six and nineteen are overweight, up from five percent in 1980, and over ten percent of children between the ages of two and five are overweight, up from seven percent in 1994; and

WHEREAS, the federal department of agriculture launched the team nutrition program in the late 1990s, which encourages schools to follow dietary guidelines by educating children

about nutritious foods and encouraging physical activity; and

WHEREAS, ninety-eight public schools in forty-eight public school districts in New Mexico are participating in the team nutrition program; and

WHEREAS, a child's diet and physical activity level play an important role in determining that child's weight, and in the past few decades, children have become increasingly less active due to such factors as the popularity of television, computers and video games; consequently, many medical experts believe that exercise may be more critical than diet for reducing obesity and disease risk factors in children; and

WHEREAS, the revenue from vending machines in public schools is vital in supporting public school activity;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study committee create a working group including local school board members, school administrators, nutritional experts, physical education instructors and representatives from industries with vending machines in public schools to study whether the lack of physical education and nutrition programs and the sale of low-nutrition foods and

beverages in public schools are contributing to childhood obesity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education study committee study the feasibility of increasing funding for nutrition and physical education programs in public schools by creating a contractual agreement between New Mexico public schools, including higher education institutions, and the companies that sell products in vending machines on public school property; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education study committee study the feasibility of this contractual agreement creating a fund with the purpose of securing matching funding with additional sources, including federal grants, matching funds and private sector funding, for nutrition and physical education programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the legislative education study committee and the public education department.