

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT, IN ADDRESSING JUVENILE OFFENDER RECIDIVISM, COMMEND KESHET DANCE COMPANY FOR ITS EFFORTS AND COLLABORATION WITH THE YOUTH DIAGNOSTIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER, JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS AND OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS TO PROVIDE DANCE EDUCATION AND MENTORSHIP FOR INCARCERATED YOUTH THROUGH THE PROCESSES OF INCARCERATION, PAROLE AND REINTEGRATION AND THAT STATE AGENCIES ENCOURAGE KESHET DANCE COMPANY AND SIMILAR ENTITIES TO TAKE TANGIBLE STEPS TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG JUVENILE OFFENDERS AND AT-RISK POPULATIONS WHO ARE POTENTIAL JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

WHEREAS, the cost of incarceration to the state is estimated at thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) per year per inmate; and

WHEREAS, current recidivism rates for New Mexico juveniles are at epidemic levels; and

WHEREAS, "The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation", an issue brief developed by the national governors association center for best practices, states that, "For at-risk youth, that segment of society most likely to suffer from limited lifetime productivity, the arts contribute to lower recidivism rates; increased self-esteem; the acquisition of job skills; and the development of much needed

creative thinking, problem solving and communications skills... involvement in the arts is one avenue by which at-risk youth can acquire the various competencies necessary to become economically self-sufficient over the long term, rather than becoming a financial strain on their states and communities... research reveals that when young people, both general and at-risk populations, study the arts they show heightened academic standing, a strong capacity for self-assessment, and a secure sense of their own ability to plan and work for a positive future"; and

WHEREAS, this report asserts that, while arts education can have a beneficial and enriching effect on all children, it is this capacity for fostering a positive self-concept and deepening students' involvement in the learning process that is most dramatic for at-risk youth; and

WHEREAS, Keshet dance company has a nine-year history of implementing dance mentorship programming for incarcerated youth at the youth diagnostic development center; and

WHEREAS, Keshet dance company has developed a curriculum for teaching math, literacy and conflict resolution skills through dance to at-risk and incarcerated juveniles through in-school and after-school education programs; and

WHEREAS, incarcerated juveniles currently participating in Keshet dance company programs show a fifty percent improvement rating on math and literacy skills, based on pre-

and post-tests given at six-week intervals, and a sixteen percent reduction in conflicts with other inmates and staff compared to nonparticipating inmates; and

WHEREAS, Keshet dance company is willing to continue its work with at-risk and incarcerated youth and to expand the scope of its work to reach more youth and to continue mentorship relationships with juveniles through the parole and reintegration process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the children, youth and families department be requested to commend Keshet dance company on its dance programs, its educational and social curricula and its provision of mentorship relationships for incarcerated and paroled youth, all aimed at reducing juvenile recidivism rates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the children, youth and families department report on its progress in collaborating with Keshet dance company and similar entities to implement dance and other arts programs to prevent incarceration in at-risk populations and reduce recidivism rates for juvenile offenders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of children, youth and families, the appropriate interim legislative committee and the legislative finance committee.