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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO STUDY
TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND THE USE OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS IN
SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

WHEREAS, the legislative and the executive branches have
made a commitment to public school reform by, for example,
eliminating most social promotion; requiring more formalized
assistance for students who are failing; increasing
grade-level and graduation requirements; and instituting the
three-tier licensure system for teachers and school
administrators to raise teacher qualifications and salaries;
and

WHEREAS, teachers and schools are now held accountable
for student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the state expects teachers to improve their
teaching skills through professional development; however,
because most teacher contracts have not been extended beyond
the instructional year, professional development often causes
teacher absences from the classroom; and

WHEREAS, studies show that students who have teachers
with fewer absences have significantly larger improvements in
test scores and other achievement indicators; and

WHEREAS, the use of substitute teachers is disruptive to
students and, over time, can affect the academic structure of

1 a class, compromise the teacher's role as an educational
2 leader in the classroom and impede students' educational
3 development; and

4 WHEREAS, substitute teachers may have no knowledge of
5 the subject matter being taught in the classroom in which
6 they are substituting or may be unable to correctly follow or
7 interpret the lesson plans left by the absent teacher; and

8 WHEREAS, the pressures of the state's accountability
9 system and the requirements for adequate yearly progress make
10 untenable the use of substitutes who end up serving merely as
11 an adult presence in the classroom; and

12 WHEREAS, New Mexico's requirements for substitute
13 teacher certification are less than rigorous, but, even so,
14 school districts often find it difficult to attract and
15 retain an adequate pool of substitute teachers; and

16 WHEREAS, it is difficult to attract and retain
17 knowledgeable substitute teachers when pay is low and
18 benefits are nonexistent; and

19 WHEREAS, the use of substitute teachers has budgetary
20 implications, and an unanticipated need for substitute
21 teachers can adversely affect a school district's budget;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
23 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study
24 committee be requested to study the issue of substitute
25 teachers, including qualifications, availability, salary and

1 benefits, frequency of use across the state, length of duty
2 and parental notification; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee study options
4 for keeping teachers in the classroom during student
5 attendance hours and improving teacher attendance in order to
6 improve student achievement; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
8 transmitted to the legislative education study committee.

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