

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 18

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007

INTRODUCED BY

Luciano "Lucky" Varela

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT CONSISTENTLY
PROCESS PUBLIC BENEFITS APPLICATIONS.

WHEREAS, one-fifth of all New Mexicans live at or below
the federal poverty level, while another twenty-five percent
live below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level, an
even more accurate measure of poverty; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico rates first in the nation for food
insecurity; and

WHEREAS, one-third of all New Mexicans who are eligible
for food stamps are not receiving food stamps; and

WHEREAS, one-third of all New Mexicans who live below the
federal poverty level are without health insurance, and one-
third of those who earn between one hundred percent and one
hundred eighty-five percent of the federal poverty level are

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1 uninsured; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico has the nation's second-highest
3 percentage of people living without health insurance coverage;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, almost one-third of New Mexican children who are
6 eligible for medicaid are not enrolled; and

7 WHEREAS, health care providers and advocates for the poor
8 report that the current application procedures for public
9 benefits are burdensome and prevent eligible New Mexicans from
10 receiving the benefits to which they are entitled;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
12 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department be
13 requested to:

14 A. conduct additional outreach so that New Mexicans
15 who are potentially eligible for public benefits are made aware
16 of existing programs and the steps they must take to apply for
17 them;

18 B. use uniform and simple application procedures
19 and policies in all field offices, so that eligible applicants
20 are not incorrectly denied benefits;

21 C. ensure that applicants receive a receipt for
22 their application so that they can provide the date and place
23 they applied;

24 D. assist all applicants in both filling out the
25 application and obtaining the verifications necessary to

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1 receive benefits;

2 E. ensure that anyone who applies for a benefits
3 program be screened for all programs for which the person may
4 be eligible;

5 F. ensure that applicants do not have to wait more
6 than one hour to see a caseworker to receive assistance with
7 benefits programs;

8 G. translate all forms into Spanish and, upon
9 request, other languages used by the clients; and

10 H. identify applicants needing special assistance
11 with the application procedures and give them that assistance;
12 and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department
14 be requested to track the use of the outlined procedures and
15 report to the interim legislative welfare reform oversight
16 committee concerning its progress in the fall of 2007 and the
17 fall of 2008; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the secretary of human services and the
20 governor.

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