

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO EXAMINE THE UTILITY OF CREATING AN INTERNAL DOMESTIC ANIMAL ABUSE DATABASE TO ADDRESS PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES.

WHEREAS, the 2012 eighth grade social studies class of the Rio Rancho cyber academy participated in project citizen, a national program to help students become involved in their communities; and

WHEREAS, as part of project citizen, the students identified animal abuse as a significant problem in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the students decided that a solution to the problems presented by animal abuse in the state could be ameliorated by the creation of a database listing people who had abused animals; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico ranks as the state with the second highest rate of pet ownership in the nation; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico also has been ranked by the animal legal defense fund as one of the worst five states for animals based on state animal protection laws; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has witnessed an increase in the reports of animal abuse to animal cruelty hotlines in the past decade; and

WHEREAS, research has established a significant correlation between animal abuse and family violence, such as child abuse, elder abuse and spousal abuse; and

WHEREAS, certain kinds of animal cruelty, particularly animal fighting, have been linked to other activities harmful to communities, including gang-related crimes, drug and alcohol abuse and illegal gambling; and

WHEREAS, a history of animal abuse is a more accurate predictor of sexual assault than is a history of conviction for homicide, arson or firearms offenses; and

WHEREAS, awareness of animal abuse would assist the state's law enforcement organizations to predict and prevent violence and other criminality; and

WHEREAS, current statutes stipulate increased criminal penalties for multiple convictions of animal crimes, yet there is no state database that tracks these offenders; and

WHEREAS, more information about animal abuse could help ameliorate public health and safety problems in the state; and

WHEREAS, the intent of compiling such information would be both to assist law enforcement in detecting and tracking crimes and to address public health needs reflected through animal abuse by highlighting the treatment needs of offenders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of public safety be requested to study the utility and cost of

creating and maintaining an internal animal abuse database focusing on pets and domestic animals for law enforcement investigations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health be requested to study the utility and cost of creating an animal abuse database focusing on pets and domestic animals for public health purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of public safety and the secretary of health.