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HOUSE MEMORIAL 8

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015

INTRODUCED BY

Sheryl Williams Stapleton

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT A TASK FORCE BE CONVENED TO STUDY AND RECOMMEND
POLICY CHANGES TO EXPAND THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES AND
ASSISTANCE FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN.

WHEREAS, more than thirty-three thousand children in New
Mexico are living with a grandparent who is responsible for
their well-being; and

WHEREAS, grandparents acting as primary caregivers for
their grandchildren often face financial hardship due to the
lack of resources and support services for grandparents raising
grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, many grandparents, despite acting as primary
caregivers for their grandchildren, lack the legal status that
would allow them to apply for benefits that their grandchildren
are eligible to receive; and

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1 WHEREAS, in response to the passage of Senate Joint
2 Memorial 14 during the 2014 legislative session, the children,
3 youth and families department published a study on the
4 availability of resources to grandparents raising
5 grandchildren; and

6 WHEREAS, the study reveals a dearth of public services and
7 resources available to grandparents raising grandchildren and,
8 in particular, to grandparents who lack legal custody of their
9 grandchildren; and

10 WHEREAS, the financial resources available to foster care
11 providers are available only to grandparents who have been
12 licensed by the protective services division of the children,
13 youth and families department and who are caring for
14 grandchildren involved with the child protective services
15 system; and

16 WHEREAS, the children, youth and families department
17 reports that the number of grandparents acting as kinship
18 foster care providers for their grandchildren is very small
19 compared to the total number of grandparents caring for their
20 grandchildren; and

21 WHEREAS, a focused approach to policymaking that
22 incorporates input from stakeholders, advocates, community
23 leaders and members of the public will help to ensure that
24 grandparents raising grandchildren have access to the tools and
25 resources necessary to nurture and provide a stable environment

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1 for their grandchildren;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a task force be
4 formed to include members who represent New Mexico voices for
5 children, Pegasus legal services for children, the New Mexico
6 coalition of educational leaders, court appointed special
7 advocates for children, the New Mexico parent-teacher
8 association, parents reaching out, the American association of
9 retired persons and Las Cumbres community services, inc.; one
10 representative each from the human services department, the
11 children, youth and families department, the children's court,
12 the public education department, the aging and long-term
13 services department and the office of the attorney general; and
14 two members from the general public; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force study and
16 recommend concrete policy changes that could be implemented in
17 order to expand the availability of resources and assistance to
18 grandparents raising grandchildren, including financial
19 resources; legal services; food and housing assistance; and
20 programs relating to medical care, child care, transportation
21 and education; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department,
23 the children, youth and families department and the aging and
24 long-term services department be requested to coordinate and
25 provide staff support to the task force; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its
2 findings and recommendations to the legislative health and
3 human services committee and the legislative finance committee
4 no later than November 2015; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
6 transmitted to the human services department, the children,
7 youth and families department and the aging and long-term
8 services department.

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