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HOUSE MEMORIAL 111

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

INTRODUCED BY

Patricio Ruiloba

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT AND CERTAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO STUDY AND DEVELOP A PILOT APPROACH TO IDENTIFY AND PROVIDE PROTECTIVE OR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO RUNAWAY CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

WHEREAS, between one million six hundred thousand and two million eight hundred thousand children run away in a year; and

WHEREAS, children ages twelve to seventeen are at higher risk for homelessness than adults; and

WHEREAS, children who run away are at high risk of victimization by human traffickers and others; substance abuse; and suicide; and

WHEREAS, children who run away from home are in crisis; and

WHEREAS, there may be many reasons underlying a runaway

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1 child's decision to run; and

2 WHEREAS, running away is not a crime unless the child has  
3 been adjudicated delinquent; and

4 WHEREAS, running away may be seen as a cry for help; and

5 WHEREAS, law enforcement options for assisting a runaway  
6 child are currently limited to helping to locate the runaway  
7 child and return the child to the home, or taking the child  
8 into protective custody; and

9 WHEREAS, there needs to be a middle path for law  
10 enforcement that allows for intervention to assess whether the  
11 runaway child and the child's family are in need of protective  
12 or supportive services and to provide those protective or  
13 supportive services; and

14 WHEREAS, the children, youth and families department is  
15 charged with providing protective services for children and  
16 youths; and

17 WHEREAS, there is currently no procedure for law  
18 enforcement personnel who have identified or located runaway  
19 children to notify the children, youth and families department  
20 of the possible need for protective or supportive services; and

21 WHEREAS, public schools are required under federal law to  
22 designate liaisons to identify and immediately enroll  
23 unaccompanied youths in school and often have information about  
24 children and their family situations that can be helpful in  
25 protecting and supporting children; and

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1           WHEREAS, children and their families would be well-served  
2 if law enforcement, the children, youth and families department  
3 and public schools were authorized to share information to  
4 provide protection and support to runaway children and their  
5 families;

6           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
7 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a task force be  
8 convened to study approaches and costs to improve communication  
9 between agencies to enable earlier identification of children  
10 and families in need of protective or supportive services; and

11           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be composed of  
12 representatives from the children, youth and families  
13 department, the Bernalillo county sheriff's office and the  
14 Albuquerque public school district; and

15           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those representatives identify  
16 a law enforcement agency from a community with a population of  
17 seventy-five thousand or less and a public school in a  
18 community with a population of seventy-five thousand or less  
19 and invite them to designate representatives to participate in  
20 the task force; and

21           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force develop a pilot  
22 approach to be tested in Bernalillo county; and

23           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its  
24 findings and make recommendations for proposed legislation and  
25 funding to the appropriate interim committee dealing with

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1 courts, corrections and justice issues by November 2015; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
3 transmitted to the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative  
4 council, the children, youth and families department, the  
5 Bernalillo county sheriff's office and the Albuquerque public  
6 school district.