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SENATE MEMORIAL 5

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

INTRODUCED BY

Jacob R. Candelaria

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO STUDY NEW APPROACHES TO FAMILY-WORK SUPPORT PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to pursue the common good so that all families in this state have improved access to economic and educational opportunities that help families achieve self-sufficiency and financial security while reducing the number of families living in poverty; and

WHEREAS, more and more middle-class families are living paycheck to paycheck, especially in these very difficult economic times; and

WHEREAS, as of 2012, nearly thirty percent of children in New Mexico live in poverty; and

WHEREAS, more states are recognizing that reducing poverty is a critical economic development issue that requires

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1 strategic, integrated and comprehensive approaches that create
2 opportunities for families to achieve economic success,
3 including creating quality jobs, providing work supports,
4 promoting greater collaboration with the private sector and
5 implementing targeted tax policies; and

6 WHEREAS, an assessment of current state policies and
7 practices within the human services department, the public
8 education department, the higher education department, the
9 department of health, the taxation and revenue department, the
10 workforce solutions department and the New Mexico mortgage
11 finance authority could promote economic opportunity and
12 poverty reduction by revealing inconsistencies across agencies
13 that determine eligibility for individuals and families to move
14 up the economic ladder; and

15 WHEREAS, working parents who receive a minor increase in
16 income, making them ineligible for various programs that allow
17 them to work, such as child care assistance, transportation,
18 food stamps and free and reduced-fee school lunches, face the
19 "cliff effect" and disincentives for achieving self-
20 sufficiency; and

21 WHEREAS, an examination of evidence-based solutions used
22 in other states may reveal significant efforts to reduce
23 poverty as well as to mitigate the cliff effect;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
25 OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative finance committee be

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1 requested to assess the state's current practices that promote
2 economic opportunity and poverty reduction and develop a
3 strategic, integrated and comprehensive plan to mitigate the
4 cliff effect; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the legislative finance
6 committee's assessment, the committee consult with the human
7 services department, the public education department, the
8 higher education department, the department of health, the
9 taxation and revenue department, the workforce solutions
10 department and the New Mexico mortgage finance authority; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the legislative finance
12 committee's assessment, the committee consult with recipients,
13 advocates and providers with experience in job support and
14 welfare-to-work programs; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative finance
16 committee evaluate and make recommendations on:

17 A. identifying best policies and practices that
18 build family assets and financial stability;

19 B. making work pay through the use of fair and
20 sustainable targeted tax policies;

21 C. expanding the work force with quality jobs that
22 meet private sector needs;

23 D. assessing work support issues, such as child
24 care, transportation, nutrition and housing needs of families;

25 E. creating a coordinated effort among state

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1 agencies to develop policies on education, health care,
2 housing, income, child care, nutrition and transportation that
3 are consistent and create incentives for self-sufficiency; and

4 F. identifying those policies and regulations that
5 conflict with the goal of self-sufficiency; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative finance
7 committee prepare a report, including the above
8 recommendations, and provide the report to the appropriate
9 legislative interim committees by December 2015; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
11 transmitted to the president pro tempore of the senate and to
12 the director of the legislative finance committee.