

March 9, 2016

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 153

The Honorable Don L. Tripp, Speaker of the House and  
Members of the House of Representatives  
State Capitol Building  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Honorable Speaker Tripp and Members of the House:

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of New Mexico, Article IV, Section 22, I hereby VETO and return HOUSE BILL 187, as amended, enacted by the Fifty-Second Legislature, Second Session, 2016.

Year after year, the Legislature (and the Senate, in particular) refuses to support or even properly consider critical education reforms designed to help struggling students, schools, and teachers. Indeed, the stranglehold the status quo special interests have on some Senators has prevented floor votes on even the most compelling reform proposals and basic education legislation.

There are countless examples. Just this year, in fact, the Senate was presented with legislation that would have required background checks for school personnel—largely non-controversial and common-sense legislation that was not even brought to the floor for a vote. Additionally, legislation that would have required our youngest school-children to be able to read by the third grade was again bottled up in committee, despite having passed both the House and the Senate in previous sessions.

The legislation I am vetoing today would allow certain school personnel to more easily become principals in New Mexico schools, including physical therapists, school nurses, guidance counselors, and other similar individuals. It's not an idea without merit, and in fact, it doesn't go nearly far enough. We need to be able to put principals in our schools who have a wide range of backgrounds, and who are singularly focused on the only thing that should matter in our education system: whether our kids are learning and growing each year, so that they can graduate and have a successful career. However, I am offended that the Legislature would have no problem allowing a physical therapist assistant to become a principal, but would repeatedly block a common-sense measure giving districts greater flexibility in hiring a retired chemist from Sandia National

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Laboratory to teach chemistry part-time at a high school that has a difficult time recruiting good teachers in the science fields. Or a retired engineer who worked at Kirtland Air Force Base from teaching a high school physics course...

It defies common sense, and reeks of petty union politics, to prevent qualified professionals in key fields from being able to teach subjects in their knowledge areas in schools that could use their expertise in the classroom. The Senate should be embracing the Adjunct Secondary Instructors Act as providing one additional tool to superintendents and principals as they work to provide the best, most complete education possible to New Mexico students. Bottling it up in a committee in order to avoid having to take a floor vote is nothing short of a devious, political game that ultimately shortchanges our students.

Respectfully yours,

Susana Martinez

Governor

RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. p.m.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2016

By \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary of State

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. p.m.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2016

By \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Clerk of the House