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A JOINT MEMORIAL

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR A STRENGTHENED COMMITMENT TO THE
ELIMINATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, according to the national education
association, despite decades of overall progress in narrowing
achievement gaps, disparities in educational outcomes related
to racial and ethnic backgrounds persist; and

WHEREAS, minority students constitute seventy-five
percent of all students, totaling more than two hundred fifty
thousand students in the state; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is a rising minority-majority state
whose minority numbers will continue to increase for
generations to come; and

WHEREAS, according to the public education department,
Latino students make up sixty-one percent of all students in
the state, totaling more than two hundred twenty thousand
students; Native American students make up eleven percent,
totaling about thirty-three thousand students; African
American students make up two percent, totaling about seven
thousand students; and Caucasian students make up
twenty-three percent, totaling about seventy-eight thousand
students; and

WHEREAS, in a report conducted by the Annie E. Casey
foundation, New Mexico is identified as the worst state in

1 which to raise a child; and

2 WHEREAS, the state would benefit from a new educational
3 paradigm to address the achievement gap; and

4 WHEREAS, the state's students represent its future
5 workforce; and

6 WHEREAS, New Mexico's children are its most precious
7 asset; and

8 WHEREAS, the cultural and linguistic diversity of the
9 state and equal opportunity for all New Mexicans should be
10 fostered; and

11 WHEREAS, the first judicial district court ruled in the
12 consolidated cases of *Yazzie v. State of New Mexico* and
13 *Martinez v. State of New Mexico* that the legislative and
14 executive branches of government must make changes to address
15 the achievement gap and provide for a "sufficient education"
16 for all students, which includes funding and programming; and

17 WHEREAS, as held in the *Yazzie/Martinez* decision, the
18 funding provided has not been sufficient for all districts to
19 provide the programs and services required by the
20 constitution of New Mexico; and

21 WHEREAS, in the *Yazzie/Martinez* decision, the court
22 observed that it is the duty of the public education
23 department to provide a constitutionally adequate education
24 system that ensures that New Mexico schools have the
25 resources necessary to give at-risk students the opportunity

1 to obtain a uniform and sufficient education that prepares
2 them for college and careers; and

3 WHEREAS, the state must continue to implement the
4 standards stated in the Hispanic Education Act and the Indian
5 Education Act to aid in the elimination of the achievement
6 gap; and

7 WHEREAS, the state must address the achievement gap and
8 develop its human potential; and

9 WHEREAS, sufficient financial resources must be applied
10 to combat the achievement gap that minority students face;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
12 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislature's strengthened
13 commitment to providing sufficient education for all students
14 regardless of race be expressed; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all agencies of the state,
16 school districts and local governments be encouraged to work
17 together to commit to the elimination of the achievement gap
18 between minority and non-minority students; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
20 transmitted to the secretary of public education, the chair of
21 the legislative education study committee and the executive
22 director of the national education association. _____

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