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HOUSE MEMORIAL 6

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2020

INTRODUCED BY

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and Gail Armstrong

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONVENE A TASK
FORCE TO ASSESS DATA AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS
BARRIERS TO FOOD ACCESS.

WHEREAS, the United States department of agriculture
research service ranks New Mexico as a state with one of the
highest rates of people experiencing hunger; and

WHEREAS, the department of health reported that three
hundred twenty-six thousand New Mexicans experienced food
insecurity in 2017; and

WHEREAS, one of every four children in New Mexico faces
hunger due to food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico leads the nation in childhood hunger;
and

WHEREAS, rural residents face significant levels of

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1 poverty; and

2 WHEREAS, the United States department of agriculture
3 reported that individuals living outside of metropolitan areas
4 experienced higher rates of food insecurity; and

5 WHEREAS, the United States department of agriculture
6 recognized that low-income communities with constrained
7 resources faced barriers in access to food; and

8 WHEREAS, lack of transportation infrastructure for food
9 distribution contributes to food insecurity and hunger; and

10 WHEREAS, the United States department of agriculture
11 recognized that distance from stores that sell fresh foods can
12 contribute to these barriers; and

13 WHEREAS, individuals facing hunger and food insecurity are
14 less likely to use personal transportation than those who are
15 food secure; and

16 WHEREAS, New Mexico food banks respond to emergency food
17 needs for people experiencing food insecurity and hunger and
18 are core to all efforts to address hunger and malnutrition; and

19 WHEREAS, New Mexico food banks collect important data
20 about food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition that could aid
21 in decision making and problem solving; and

22 WHEREAS, agriculture is vital to New Mexico's economy and
23 culture; and

24 WHEREAS, over ninety percent of food New Mexicans consume
25 comes from out of state, and nearly all food produced in New

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1 Mexico leaves the state; and

2 WHEREAS, gaps in the agricultural supply chain and
3 distribution infrastructure affect the ability of New Mexicans
4 to obtain sufficient and healthy food; and

5 WHEREAS, New Mexico could rely on state farmers and
6 ranchers for needed food, which would further benefit the
7 state's economy, environment and access to nutritious food; and

8 WHEREAS, a stronger local food system keeps more dollars
9 in local communities and helps combat food insecurity and
10 hunger;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
12 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary
13 of human services be requested to convene a task force to study
14 and assess hunger, malnutrition, food production and
15 distribution; assess existing data; and identify the state's
16 barriers to ensuring that all New Mexicans have access to a
17 nutritious and sufficient diet; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be composed of
19 representatives from:

- 20 A. the human services department;
- 21 B. the department of health;
- 22 C. the aging and long-term services department;
- 23 D. the New Mexico department of agriculture;
- 24 E. the children, youth and families department;
- 25 F. the university of New Mexico;

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- 1 G. New Mexico state university;
- 2 H. the New Mexico state university agricultural
- 3 experiment station;
- 4 I. the office of the governor;
- 5 J. the Indian affairs department;
- 6 K. the New Mexico association of food banks;
- 7 L. the public education department;
- 8 M. food, hunger and nonprofit organizations; and
- 9 N. the higher education department; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
11 examine the best available data and assess:

- 12 A. the incidence of hunger and malnutrition;
- 13 B. causes and ramifications of hunger and
- 14 malnutrition;
- 15 C. public awareness of the characteristics of a
- 16 healthy and nutritious diet and the consequences of maintaining
- 17 an unhealthy diet;
- 18 D. publicly funded meal programs, including those
- 19 provided in schools, senior centers and facilities and
- 20 intergenerational summer meal programs;
- 21 E. the ability of residents to access and purchase
- 22 healthy and nutritious foods;
- 23 F. food production and agriculture in New Mexico;
- 24 G. infrastructure for food produced in New Mexico;
- 25 H. transportation and distribution of food products

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1 to processors and markets;

2 I. the distance of food retailers from households
3 relative to where the population lives;

4 J. the ability of households, emergency food
5 providers and agricultural producers to safely store perishable
6 food; and

7 K. public and private nutrition assistance
8 programs; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that through identifying and
10 analyzing the best available data, the task force be requested
11 to identify:

12 A. the scope, causes and ramifications of hunger
13 and malnutrition in New Mexico;

14 B. policies and programs addressing hunger that
15 could be improved;

16 C. policies and programs that address and provide
17 recommendations for intergenerational meal programs;

18 D. charitable efforts that may assist in addressing
19 hunger;

20 E. ways to strengthen the relationships between New
21 Mexico food production, food retail and publicly funded meal
22 programs;

23 F. methods of improving statewide infrastructure to
24 address these interrelated problems; and

25 G. methods of improving data- and information-

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1 sharing systems across industries and sectors that collect
2 food, hunger, malnutrition and agriculture data to facilitate
3 monitoring, analysis and problem solving to strengthen local
4 food systems and reduce hunger and malnutrition; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
6 report its findings and recommendations to the office of the
7 governor and the legislative health and human services
8 committee by November 1, 2020; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
10 transmitted to the governor, the secretary of human services
11 and the chair of the legislative health and human services
12 committee.