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SENATE MEMORIAL

**55TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2022**

INTRODUCED BY

Steven P. Neville and Gerald Ortiz y Pino

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES TO CONVENE A  
TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE COSTS, BENEFITS AND FEASIBILITY OF  
TRANSITIONING DETENTION FACILITIES FROM INDIVIDUAL COUNTY  
OPERATIONS TO A UNIFIED JAIL AND PRISON SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, there are twenty-seven county-operated adult  
detention facilities in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the operational capacity of county-operated adult  
detention facilities ranges from ten detainees and inmates to  
two thousand three hundred thirty-six detainees and inmates;  
and

WHEREAS, the average daily population of the twenty-seven  
county-operated adult detention facilities ranges from two to  
one thousand one hundred sixty detainees and inmates; and

WHEREAS, detention facilities are complex operations that

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1 require a high level of expertise and adequate numbers of well-  
2 trained staff to function properly; and

3 WHEREAS, substantial time and resources are spent by  
4 various governmental entities billing each other for the costs  
5 of incarceration and addressing disputes regarding who is  
6 responsible for paying those costs; and

7 WHEREAS, detainees and inmates are poorly served by a  
8 system that does not have a way to effectively share medical  
9 and behavioral health information; and

10 WHEREAS, the services and programming available in county  
11 detention facilities vary greatly; and

12 WHEREAS, significant taxpayer dollars are wasted by having  
13 twenty-seven independent facilities, each requiring  
14 comprehensive medical and mental health services regardless of  
15 size or capacity; and

16 WHEREAS, Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode  
17 Island and Vermont all have unified jail and prison systems,  
18 and West Virginia has a single state authority that oversees  
19 regional facilities; and

20 WHEREAS, New Mexico could benefit from the efficiencies  
21 created by a unified system where records could be shared and  
22 resources could be saved through economies of scale; and

23 WHEREAS, it is inefficient and wasteful to have numerous  
24 independent governmental entities operating detention  
25 facilities within the state;

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1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
2 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico association of counties be  
3 requested to convene a task force of stakeholders to study the  
4 costs, benefits and feasibility of transitioning the state to a  
5 unified jail and prison system; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include  
7 representatives from the New Mexico association of counties,  
8 the corrections department and the administrative office of the  
9 courts; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its  
11 findings to the appropriate interim legislative committee by  
12 December 1, 2022; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
14 transmitted to the executive director of the New Mexico  
15 association of counties, the director of the administrative  
16 office of the courts and the secretary of corrections.