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A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 14, 2022 "FOURTH TRIMESTER CARE DAY" IN
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, the current practice in health care is to
provide focused care during pregnancy and birth, with weekly
checkups in the final weeks of gestation; and

WHEREAS, a new mother is often afforded a single
follow-up visit six weeks after her baby is born; and

WHEREAS, healthy development during the first few years
of the life of a child is a crucial factor in creating
positive outcomes for the rest of the child's life; and

WHEREAS, the well-being of a mother and an infant are
intimately connected; and

WHEREAS, rather than treating a mother and an infant
separately, mother and infant care should be understood as
mutually beneficial, with the needs of the one considered in
the context of the needs of the other; and

WHEREAS, a mother undergoes a period of substantial
transformation and adaptation through the first three months
of motherhood, simultaneously experiencing physical, hormonal
and psychosocial changes as well as shifting roles and
responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, this period of transition should be recognized
as the "fourth trimester", which is a time during which

1 mothers are deserving of care in their own right; and

2 WHEREAS, mothers may suffer a number of physical health
3 issues during the fourth trimester that far too often go
4 undiagnosed and therefore untreated; and

5 WHEREAS, some of the health issues mothers have reported
6 experiencing include: breastfeeding problems, infections,
7 physical exhaustion, sleep loss, depression and stress,
8 anxiety and rage, loneliness, frequent headaches, heavy
9 bleeding, backache, weight control, pelvic and coccyx pain,
10 urinary and fecal incontinence, diastasis recti, pelvic organ
11 prolapse, scar tissue pain from Cesarean section, episiotomy
12 or natural tearing, hemorrhoids, pubic symphysis separation
13 and painful intercourse; and

14 WHEREAS, physical health issues resulting from
15 childbirth can also affect the mental health of new mothers;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, mental health issues that new mothers face
18 impact their ability to care and nurture their babies, return
19 to the workforce and engage in their work once they return;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, according to the federal centers for disease
22 control and prevention, one in nine mothers in the United
23 States experience symptoms of postpartum depression and
24 anxiety; and

25 WHEREAS, major medical organizations recommend six

1 months of exclusive breastfeeding, recognizing that
2 breastfeeding is associated with positive health outcomes for
3 a mother and her infant; and

4 WHEREAS, only twenty-one percent of mothers achieve the
5 recommended six months of exclusive breastfeeding; and

6 WHEREAS, the failure to achieve six months of
7 breastfeeding results, in part, from social constraints such
8 as unpaid maternity leave, negative attitudes toward
9 breastfeeding in public and a lack of workplace
10 accommodations for breastfeeding mothers; and

11 WHEREAS, twenty-three percent of employed mothers return
12 to work within ten days postpartum despite evidence that
13 suggests that postpartum tissue damage requires six weeks for
14 recovery; and

15 WHEREAS, these compounding physical and mental health
16 issues make it even more difficult for employed, postpartum
17 mothers to fulfill the roles and responsibilities required in
18 the course of their employment; and

19 WHEREAS, for the sake of the health and well-being of
20 both mother and infant, a mother should receive the mental,
21 physical, social and economic support she needs to
22 successfully transition through this all-important,
23 consequential fourth trimester period; and

24 WHEREAS, physical therapists can assist mothers through
25 postpartum recovery during the fourth trimester period;

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
2 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that February 14,
3 2022 be declared "Fourth Trimester Care Day" in the house of
4 representatives; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a membership organization
6 that represents physical therapists be invited to present to
7 the legislative health and human services committee before
8 December 2, 2022; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
10 transmitted to the governor, members of the legislative health
11 and human services committee and members of the American
12 physical therapy association New Mexico. _____

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