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HOUSE MEMORIAL 4

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

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO DECLARE SEPTEMBER 23, 2022 "FOURTH TRIMESTER CARE DAY" IN NEW MEXICO.

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

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1 mutually beneficial, with the needs of the one considered in
2 the context of the needs of the other; and

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

8 WHEREAS, this period of transition should be recognized as
9 the "fourth trimester", which is a time during which mothers
10 are deserving of care in their own right; and

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

14 WHEREAS, some of the health issues mothers have reported
15 experiencing include: breastfeeding problems, infections,
16 physical exhaustion, sleep loss, depression and stress, anxiety
17 and rage, loneliness, frequent headaches, heavy bleeding,
18 backache, weight control, pelvic and coccyx pain, urinary and
19 fecal incontinence, diastasis recti, pelvic organ prolapse,
20 scar tissue pain from Cesarean section, episiotomy or natural
21 tearing, hemorrhoids, pubic symphysis separation and painful
22 intercourse; and

23 WHEREAS, physical health issues resulting from childbirth
24 can also affect the mental health of new mothers; and

25 WHEREAS, mental health issues that new mothers face impact

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1 their ability to care and nurture their babies, return to the
2 workforce and engage in their work once they return; and

3 WHEREAS, according to the federal centers for disease
4 control and prevention, one in nine mothers in the United
5 States experience symptoms of postpartum depression and
6 anxiety; and

7 WHEREAS, major medical organizations recommend six months
8 of exclusive breastfeeding, recognizing that breastfeeding is
9 associated with positive health outcomes for a mother and her
10 infant; and

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

13 WHEREAS, the failure to achieve six months of
14 breastfeeding results, in part, from social constraints such as
15 unpaid maternity leave, negative attitudes toward breastfeeding
16 in public and a lack of workplace accommodations for
17 breastfeeding mothers; and

18 WHEREAS, twenty-three percent of employed mothers return
19 to work within ten days postpartum despite evidence that
20 suggests that postpartum tissue damage requires six weeks for
21 recovery; and

22 WHEREAS, these compounding physical and mental health
23 issues make it even more difficult for employed, postpartum
24 mothers to fulfill the roles and responsibilities required in
25 the course of their employment; and

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