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SENATE MEMORIAL 76

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018

INTRODUCED BY

Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHARGE THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE WITH RECEIVING TESTIMONY AND REPORTING ON STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CUTS TO SENIOR CITIZEN SERVICES AND THE IMPACT OF THOSE CUTS ON SENIOR CITIZENS IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, many New Mexico senior citizens face challenges such as living on a reduced income, health issues and increased levels of food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, according to aging and long-term services department statistics, by 2030, the population of New Mexicans aged sixty or older will more than double, placing New Mexico third in the nation for percentage of population aged sixty or older; and

WHEREAS, the aging and long-term services department

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1 reports that New Mexico ranks eighth among all states in the
2 percentage of people aged sixty or older living with food
3 insecurity; and

4 WHEREAS, recent state and federal government cuts to
5 budgets supporting senior citizen services have a direct impact
6 on nutrition services provided to senior citizens in New
7 Mexico; and

8 WHEREAS, compared to thirty-five percent nationally,
9 forty-six percent of New Mexico seniors report having to choose
10 between buying food and paying for utilities; and

11 WHEREAS, senior citizen nutritional programs are available
12 in New Mexico communities, with congregate meals served in a
13 setting such as a senior or community center, home-delivered
14 meals to clients who are homebound and nutritional programs
15 that provide elders a nutritious breakfast and lunch; and

16 WHEREAS, thirty percent of New Mexico's senior citizens
17 seek help from food pantries; and

18 WHEREAS, food insecurity is associated with high blood
19 pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, aggression, anxiety
20 and depression; and

21 WHEREAS, ninety-two percent of recipients who receive
22 meals delivered to their homes said the meals allowed them to
23 live at home; and

24 WHEREAS, often, the meal provided by a meals program is
25 the only hot meal a senior citizen receives each day; a lack of

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1 food occasionally leaves senior citizens at centers without a
2 noon meal; and meal delivery schedules may be erratic because
3 of vehicle bonding issues; and

4 WHEREAS, rural meal sites are threatened annually with
5 closures; and

6 WHEREAS, food distribution organizations are faced with a
7 lack of available fresh fruits and vegetables, and senior
8 centers have been prohibited from growing their own fruits and
9 vegetables; and

10 WHEREAS, New Mexico addresses senior citizen hunger issues
11 on several fronts through programs provided by the aging and
12 long-term services department, the policy advisory committee
13 and four area agencies on aging; and

14 WHEREAS, the United States department of agriculture food
15 and nutrition service administers the federal supplemental
16 nutrition assistance program and commodity supplemental food
17 program in New Mexico; and

18 WHEREAS, local meals on wheels programs are administered
19 through a federal community development block grant program
20 administered by the United States department of housing and
21 urban development; and

22 WHEREAS, the future of these programs is uncertain, and
23 information is needed on how funding cuts impact the
24 nutritional services that can be provided to senior citizens in
25 New Mexico;

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1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
2 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council be
3 requested to charge the legislative health and human services
4 committee with receiving testimony by August 1, 2018 related to
5 state and federal government cuts to senior citizen services
6 and the impact of those cuts on senior citizens in New Mexico;
7 and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative health and
9 human services committee be requested to solicit reporting from
10 the aging and long-term services department, the policy
11 advisory committee, the area agencies on aging and the United
12 States department of agriculture food and nutrition service's
13 supplemental nutrition assistance program; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative health and
15 human services committee report its findings and conclusions
16 during the 2018 interim; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
18 transmitted to the governor, the co-chairs of the New Mexico
19 legislative council, the chair of the legislative health and
20 human services committee, members of the policy advisory
21 committee, the secretary of aging and long-term services,
22 representatives of the area agencies on aging, the United
23 States secretary of housing and urban development and the
24 United States secretary of agriculture.

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