

1 A MEMORIAL
2 REQUESTING THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A TASK
3 FORCE TO STUDY, DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AND DRAFT
4 LEGISLATION FOR COLLECTING DATA ON PARENTING STUDENTS IN THE
5 NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM.

6
7 WHEREAS, in 2023, New Mexico had the third highest
8 poverty rate in the nation, and an estimated forty-six
9 percent of households were below the asset limited, income
10 constrained, employed threshold; and

11 WHEREAS, New Mexico's labor force participation rate is
12 lower than the United States average; and

13 WHEREAS, labor force participation rates increase as
14 educational attainment increases; and

15 WHEREAS, in 2024, one in three New Mexico college
16 students were parents or were expecting to be parents
17 according to a survey conducted by Santa Fe community
18 college's early childhood center of excellence; and

19 WHEREAS, in 2023, New Mexico's child poverty rate was
20 nearly twenty-three percent; and

21 WHEREAS, on average, the children of mothers who
22 complete a degree are more likely to graduate high school and
23 get a college degree themselves; and

24 WHEREAS, the opportunity scholarship and government
25 results and opportunity program fund funding have opened new

1 pathways to educational attainment for adult learners in
2 New Mexico; and

3 WHEREAS, through the programs, the New Mexico
4 legislature has demonstrated a commitment to providing
5 necessary supports and resources for adult learners to
6 succeed; and

7 WHEREAS, even with these measures, parenting students
8 have unique barriers to college completion and struggle to
9 find resources to overcome those barriers; and

10 WHEREAS, there are currently no standardized methods of
11 identifying parenting students and their barriers to success
12 or developing targeted strategies for improving their
13 educational outcomes in New Mexico higher education
14 institutions;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
16 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the higher education department be
17 requested to convene a task force to study, develop
18 recommendations for and draft legislation for collecting data
19 on parenting students; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include the
21 following members:

22 A. staff from at least two four-year public higher
23 education institutions, including institutional research and
24 student services staff;

25 B. staff from at least two two-year community

1 colleges, including institutional research and student
2 services staff;

3 C. staff from a tribal college or university;

4 D. parenting students from at least two public
5 colleges or universities;

6 E. a member of the children's cabinet;

7 F. a representative from the data advisory group
8 of the higher education department; and

9 G. a representative from the New Mexico student
10 parent alliance; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force prepare a
12 report containing a definition of "parenting student",
13 meaning a student who is the parent or legal guardian of a
14 dependent child or children, including biological, step,
15 foster, adopted or other children for whom the student has
16 primary caregiving responsibilities, that can be used by
17 higher education institutions in the state; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report contain an
19 assessment of the current status of parenting student data
20 collection and recommendations for implementing statewide
21 data collection for higher education institutions, including
22 suggested consistent question phrasing and modes of data
23 collection that routinely assess parenting status over the
24 length of students' enrollment, such as collecting parenting
25 status data each academic term as part of the higher

1 education department's end of semester and degree reporting
2 submissions, or through other regular data-collection
3 mechanisms that allow higher education institutions to assess
4 parenting status throughout the span of students' enrollment;
5 and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present its
7 report and recommendations to the legislative health and
8 human services committee and other appropriate legislative
9 interim committees by November 1, 2026; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
11 transmitted to the governor and the secretary of higher
12 education. _____

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