

HOUSE MEMORIAL 13

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A TEN-YEAR PLAN AND FUNDING STRATEGY TO ADDRESS MODERNIZATION AND SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS IN THE NEW MEXICO CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT INTERFERE WITH SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, PUBLIC SAFETY AND EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW.

WHEREAS, *Policy Spotlight: Felony Arrests and Outcomes*, a report by the legislative finance committee, examines levels of serious crime in New Mexico in comparison to other states; and

WHEREAS, *Policy Spotlight: Felony Arrests and Outcomes* documents major impediments in the processing of individuals arrested for crimes across law enforcement, district attorney offices, the courts and corrections and reveals high rates of case dismissals both prior to and at adjudication, resulting in repeat offenses that often escalate in violence over time; and

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1 WHEREAS, *Policy Spotlight: Felony Arrests and Outcomes*
2 describes a lack of consistent reporting of crime, case
3 dismissals and case dispositions across the criminal justice
4 system, despite such reporting being required by law and
5 necessary for the legislature, the executive and the courts to
6 clearly identify justice system performance problems; and

7 WHEREAS, the *New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy Job Task*
8 and *Curriculum Analysis* final report published by the
9 international association of directors of law enforcement
10 external assessment under contract to the department of public
11 safety concluded that initial law enforcement certification
12 training is outdated and misaligned with national standards,
13 contributing to an undertrained public safety workforce that is
14 not consistently prepared to provide scientifically valid
15 evidence or respond effectively to evolving criminal activity,
16 and continuing education and advanced and specialized training
17 were found to be similarly outdated; and

18 WHEREAS, training and education functions for criminal
19 justice system positions, currently located within operating
20 agencies, are understaffed and underfunded and should be
21 transferred to institutions of higher education to allow for
22 updated and enforceable standards; and

23 WHEREAS, program evaluation reports conducted by the
24 legislative finance committee have been shared with legislative
25 interim committees, and the testimony of experts indicates

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1 consistently high vacancy and turnover rates in critical
2 positions within the criminal justice system statewide,
3 exacerbating inadequate responses to community needs, delays in
4 case processing and adjudication and challenges in safely
5 managing corrections and community reentry functions; and

6 WHEREAS, local agencies with significant vacancy and
7 turnover rates lack both the resources and expertise to
8 evaluate alternative staffing strategies and deploy effective
9 recruiting strategies; and

10 WHEREAS, justice system positions are largely shaped by
11 diverse local practices and, with limited local exceptions,
12 have not adapted to twenty-first-century challenges, failing to
13 provide clear career pathways to retain existing personnel or
14 attract talented youth and mid-career professionals and
15 contributing to the loss of experienced New Mexico
16 professionals to other states; and

17 WHEREAS, the lack of oversight for law enforcement,
18 prosecution, adjudication and corrections undermines public
19 confidence in the criminal justice system; and

20 WHEREAS, presentations by the New Mexico association of
21 counties, the New Mexico municipal league and other
22 stakeholders report high rates of litigation and settlement
23 costs for alleged civil rights violations across the criminal
24 justice system, posing a threat to the financial viability of
25 local governments;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative
finance committee be requested to convene a task force to
develop a ten-year plan and funding strategy to address and
modernize systemic problems in the New Mexico criminal justice
system that interfere with system performance, public safety
and equal justice under the law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative finance committee be requested to develop and lead a task force to develop recommendations for the legislature to:

A. establish a planning and oversight strategy to elaborate and monitor implementation of the plan;

B. create a funding strategy to support the plan;
and

C. identify critical first legislative actions responsive to key critical issues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force consist of representation from stakeholders within the criminal justice system and interested citizens that represent the geographic and cultural diversity of the state, including justice system prevention program leaders, 911 agency leaders, law enforcement agency leadership, tribal and pueblo law enforcement, the New Mexico state police division of the department of public safety, prosecutors, diversion program leaders, public defender and defense bar leadership, juvenile probation and parole

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1 leaders, juvenile detention center leaders, magistrate and
2 district court judges, specialty court and children's court
3 judges, correctional officer leadership, probation officer
4 leadership, interested citizens at large and legislators; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership not exceed
6 thirty members and that applicants be selected by four
7 legislators, one from each party within the house of
8 representatives and senate to be appointed by the speaker of
9 the house and the president pro tempore of the senate in
10 consultation with the legislative finance committee staff
11 assigned to administer the task force; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative finance
13 committee leadership for the task force be requested to provide
14 opportunities to present information and recommendations to the
15 task force by the administrative office of the courts, the
16 administrative office of the district attorneys, the
17 corrections department, the department of public safety, the
18 children, youth and families department, the state department
19 of justice, the higher education department, the regulation and
20 licensing department, the New Mexico association of counties
21 and the New Mexico municipal league; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force elect a chair
23 and co-chair to facilitate task force decision making on
24 recommendations and that legislative finance committee staff
25 develop agendas and prepare materials for task force

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1 deliberations with input from members, as well as consultation
2 with experts; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that recommendations be made
4 regarding establishing a fund to be invested such that income
5 generated will support the goals established by the task force;
6 and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force's goals
8 include:

9 A. establishing a planning and oversight body to
10 integrate local planning into a state-level modernization plan
11 for the justice system and monitor implementation for at least
12 ten years;

13 B. establishing a process for modernizing justice
14 system position descriptions, educational requirements and
15 staffing adequacy;

16 C. ensuring ongoing updating of all educational
17 curriculum and training methods to national standards and best
18 practices;

19 D. establishing a planning function at the judicial
20 district level to adapt and link state programs to meet local
21 needs and link that planning system to the system established
22 in 2025 for behavioral health services as administered by the
23 administrative office of the courts;

24 E. identifying work groups and a process to define
25 standardized data elements needed to evaluate system

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1 performance at system institutions and for the system as a
2 whole;

3 F. establishing a process to plan for career paths
4 for justice system professionals, with linkage to the state
5 college system; and

6 G. recommending legislation for the 2027
7 legislative session to address the most immediate needs related
8 to these goals; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
10 submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the
11 interim committee that studies courts, corrections and justice
12 issues by November 26, 2026 and by January 5, 2027 to the
13 governor and the legislature for consideration during the first
14 session of the fifty-eighth legislature; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
16 transmitted to the staff of the legislative finance committee,
17 the office of the governor, the attorney general, the
18 administrative office of the courts, the administrative office
19 of the district attorneys and the chief public defender.

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