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SENATE MEMORIAL 16

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

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, in 2024, one in three New Mexico college students
were parents or were expecting to be parents according to a
.233588.1

1 survey conducted by Santa Fe community college's early
2 childhood center of excellence; and

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

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

8 WHEREAS, the opportunity scholarship and government
9 results and opportunity program fund funding have opened new
10 pathways to educational attainment for adult learners in New
11 Mexico; and

12 WHEREAS, through the programs, the New Mexico legislature
13 has demonstrated a commitment to providing necessary supports
14 and resources for adult learners to succeed; and

15 WHEREAS, even with these measures, parenting students have
16 unique barriers to college completion and struggle to find
17 resources to overcome those barriers; and

18 WHEREAS, there are currently no standardized methods of
19 identifying parenting students and their barriers to success or
20 developing targeted strategies for improving their educational
21 outcomes in New Mexico higher education institutions;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
23 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the higher
24 education department be requested to convene a task force to
25 study, develop recommendations for and draft legislation for

.233588.1

1 collecting data on parenting students; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include the
3 following members:

4 A. staff from at least two four-year public higher
5 education institutions, including institutional research and
6 student services staff;

7 B. staff from at least two two-year community
8 colleges, including institutional research and student services
9 staff;

10 C. staff from a tribal college or university;

11 D. parenting students from at least two public
12 colleges or universities;

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

14 F. a representative from the data advisory group of
15 the higher education department; and

16 G. a representative from the New Mexico student
17 parent alliance; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force prepare a
19 report containing a definition of "parenting student", meaning
20 a student who is the parent or legal guardian of a dependent
21 child or children, including biological, step, foster, adopted
22 or other children for whom the student has primary caregiving
23 responsibilities, that can be used by higher education
24 institutions in the state; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report contain an

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1 assessment of the current status of parenting student data
2 collection and recommendations for implementing statewide data
3 collection for higher education institutions, including
4 suggested consistent question phrasing and modes of data
5 collection that routinely assess parenting status over the
6 length of students' enrollment, such as collecting parenting
7 status data each academic term as part of the higher education
8 department's end of semester and degree reporting submissions,
9 or through other regular data-collection mechanisms that allow
10 higher education institutions to assess parenting status
11 throughout the span of students' enrollment; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present its
13 report and recommendations to the legislative health and human
14 services committee and other appropriate legislative interim
15 committees by November 1, 2026; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
17 transmitted to the governor and the secretary of higher
18 education.