



State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

March 21, 2025

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 6

The Honorable Javier Martínez, Speaker of the House and
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Honorable Speaker Martínez and Members of the House:

Pursuant to my authority under Article IV, Section 22 of the New Mexico Constitution, I have signed HOUSE BILL 5, as amended (“HB 5”), enacted by the Fifty-Seventh Legislature, First Session, 2025. Ensuring the safety and well-being of New Mexico’s children is one of our most sacred responsibilities. That is why I proposed the creation of the Child Protection Authority to receive and investigate complaints regarding the handling of abuse, neglect and foster care cases. The legislature preferred the Office of Child Advocate, which was initially weaponized for the Attorney General and the legislature to intimidate CYFD and its staff. Make no mistake about it, this bill was not designed to protect children. It was a thinly-disguised vendetta by a legislature that is still upset at my continuing pursuits of meaningful criminal justice legislation in New Mexico and an Attorney General who has failed to demonstrate that public safety is a priority in any meaningful way.

As initially drafted, HB 5 would have allowed the Attorney General to engage in civil litigation against CYFD and its employees. I find it disturbing that the individual who refers to himself as “the chief legal counsel and advisor to the executive branch of state government including all executive departments” literally lobbied for authority to bring legal action against the very people he purports to be “counsel and advisor” to, and did not appreciate the obvious conflict of interest that would have created. It is disappointing that the “chief legal authority for the state of New Mexico” spent the 2025 legislative session trying to curry favor with the legislature by offering to sue overworked and underpaid employees rather than participating in conversations about meaningful public safety measures and child welfare policies at CYFD.

Luckily, a bipartisan coalition of senators did see that conflict, and took action to resolve it. I would like to thank Senate President Pro Tem Mimi Stewart, Leader William Sharer, Senator

REC'D M-SEC. OF STATE
2025 MAR 21 AM 7:54

Michael Padilla, Senator Katy Duhigg, and Senator Crystal Brantley for their work amending the bill to ensure the Office of the Child Advocate will be able to begin its operations with integrity.

I would also like to take a moment of personal privilege to say that I am deeply disturbed by the legislature's gleeful condemnation of CYFD. These same legislators insulted social workers, foster families, and case managers. People that literally spend their days trying their best to do good work for our children to keep them safe and give them the supports they need. The irony that the same individuals that literally refuse to fully fund the agency to hire enough staff then criticize their vacancy rates and unmanageable workloads should not be lost on New Mexicans. The personal attacks on the secretary and the staff from people that love to blame others for problems without ever offering any type of actual solution demonstrates quite clearly that many members of this legislature care more about posturing and grandstanding at the expense of hardworking state employees than it does about actually helping New Mexico's most vulnerable children.

Despite these issues, I have signed HB 5.

Respectfully yours,


Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Time: 7:54 a.m. p.m.
Date: 3/21 2025 *for*
By:  _____
Secretary of State

Time: _____ a.m. p.m.
Date: _____ 2025 By _____
Chief Clerk of the House