1	SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 15
2	46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2004
3	INTRODUCED BY
4	Linda M Lopez
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10	A JOINT MEMORIAL
11	REQUESTING THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT TO
12	CONVENE A GROUP TO STUDY ISSUES RELATING TO TEEN PARENTS AND
13	DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES.
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15	WHEREAS, New Mexico has the fourth highest teen birth rate
16	in the nation, accounting for more than twelve births by teen
17	mothers each day, approximately four thousand five hundred
18	births in 2002; and
19	WHEREAS, the state recognizes the importance of infant
20	mental health and that children of teen parents are at a high
21	risk for developing mental health problems; and
22	WHEREAS, nearly four out of ten girls become pregnant at
23	least once before the age of twenty; and
24	WHEREAS, teen pregnancy results in serious education and
25	health problems for the mother and father, including:
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1 A. teen mothers who are more likely to have serious 2 complications during pregnancy and delivery; 3 **B**. teen fathers and mothers who are less likely to 4 earn a high school diploma; and **C**. teen fatherhood as a predictor of juvenile 5 delinquency; and 6 7 WHEREAS, the children of teen parents are more likely to: A. live in poverty; 8 B. have health problems at birth; 9 10 C. be physically abused, abandoned or neglected; D. do poorly in school; 11 12 Е. be incarcerated; or F. become teen mothers: and 13 WHEREAS, teen parents are at a higher risk to be victims 14 of crime and exploitation, including domestic violence; and 15 WHEREAS, education, housing and support are critical for 16 teen parents; and 17 WHEREAS, teen parents have a great potential to be closely 18 bonded to their children and provide for positive outcomes for 19 their children if they are supported in their parenting role; 20 and 21 WHEREAS, teen pregnancy costs New Mexico about two hundred 22 sixteen million dollars (\$216,000,000) per year; 23 NOW. THEREFORE. BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE 24 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the children, youth and families 25 . 149212. 1

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department convene a study group that includes appropriate staff from the department of health, the human services department, the labor department, the public education department, the United States housing and urban development department, as permitted, and community members knowledgeable about services to parenting teens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group survey the state for programs that work for teen parents, analyze the kinds of services and support programs needed by teen parents and describe the service gaps that exist in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group develop a comprehensive strategic plan to address the service gaps and support needs and recommend a state agency to take responsibility for implementing the plan to address the needs of parenting teens and their children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the children, youth and families department, the department of health, the human services department, the labor department and the public education department; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the results of the findings of the study group be reported to the interim legislative health and human services committee by October 31, 2004 and that two copies of the report be provided to the legislative council service library.

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