

A MEMORIAL

URGING CONGRESS TO ENSURE THAT NEW MEXICO'S STUDENTS ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND BY UNFUNDED MANDATES IN THE FEDERAL NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT.

WHEREAS, New Mexico's students are among the poorest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, over one-half of the people in New Mexico speak a language other than English in the home and many students entering public school are non-English speaking; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a shortage of highly qualified teachers, especially in areas of extreme poverty and where English proficiency is limited; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires even students who enter school speaking a language other than English to become proficient by federal standards; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires all teachers in core subject areas to meet federal standards as "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-2006 school year; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act has not yet been fully funded and, in fact, has never been funded to pay for even fifty percent of the programs and requirements that it mandates; and

WHEREAS, neither the "letter of the law" nor the goals

of the federal No Child Left Behind Act can be achieved without adequate funding; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico schools and educators will face sanctions, including school closures, if student performance is not adequate, even if funding is woefully inadequate; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico students who are improving and whose schools are improving should not face disruption because of failure to meet a federal standard that is set without funding essential to achieve that standard; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico taxpayers are already required to take on the additional financial burden imposed by federal standards even though a federal mandate deserves adequate federal funding; and

WHEREAS, estimates from other states that do not share New Mexico's language challenges indicate that the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires an additional expenditure per student between five hundred seventy-five dollars (\$575) and one thousand thirty-two dollars (\$1,032), although federal funding has provided only between seven dollars (\$7.00) and seventy-seven dollars (\$77.00) per student; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico taxpayers have demonstrated their devotion to educational progress and respect for cultural and language differences by their support for funding increases for public education and for altering the state constitution to support educational initiatives; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico taxpayers have increased their support for full-day kindergarten programs and other initiatives to improve the chances for success of children before they enter first grade; and

WHEREAS, the people of this state are investing in education for their students and do not want their schools disrupted by federal educational agencies that oversee but are not adequately funded for improvements in education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the time has come for the United States congress to fund the lofty mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act or to accept a measure of responsibility for failing to achieve them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New Mexico's congressional representatives be advised that their support for full funding or relaxed standards is expected by New Mexico taxpayers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of public education, to all New Mexico school districts, to the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation, to the president of the United States and to the United States secretary of education.