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1 WHEREAS, prescription drugs are being given to millions of
2 school-age children to control behavior problems such as
3 hyperactivity, inattention, impulsivity and depression; and

4 WHEREAS, these drugs include methylphenidate, commonly
5 known as ritalin, D-amphetamine, commonly known as adderall,
6 fluoxetine, commonly known as prozac, sertraline, commonly
7 known as zoloft, isotretinoin, commonly known as accutane, and
8 others; and

9 WHEREAS, unintended side effects of these drugs can have
10 very serious consequences, including decreased blood flow to
11 the brain, disruption of growth hormone, addiction and abuse,
12 psychosis, depression, suicide, insomnia, agitation, social
13 withdrawal and worsening of the very symptoms the drugs are
14 intended to control; and

15 WHEREAS, research has shown that as many as six percent of
16 all children taking stimulant medications developed psychotic
17 symptoms or side effects during treatment; and

18 WHEREAS, research has also shown that there is no evidence
19 that antidepressants are more effective than placebos for
20 depression in children and adolescents; and

21 WHEREAS, antidepressant drugs have been demonstrated in
22 trials to be effective in treating adult major depression, but
23 these trials generally excluded children, making it unsafe to
24 extrapolate this evidence of effectiveness to children; and

25 WHEREAS, the prescribing of drugs whose chemical action

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1 can alter thinking and behavior, triggering hostility,
2 aggressiveness and impulsivity, may pose a safety hazard
3 greater than drugs that are obtained illicitly that are used by
4 only a few individuals; and

5 WHEREAS, a growing body of research indicates that the
6 benefits of proper nutrition are critical in modulating
7 attention deficit hyperactivity disorder behavior, and that
8 there is a need for supplementation of specific vitamins and
9 minerals in these children; and

10 WHEREAS, regular exercise has been proven to reduce
11 stress, anxiety and depression, boost self-esteem and improve
12 sleep; and

13 WHEREAS, exercise is known to increase the body's
14 production of endorphins, which reduce pain and promote a
15 general sense of well-being; and

16 WHEREAS, many factors, including advertising, promotional
17 campaigns targeted at teachers and pressure from teachers and
18 others lead parents to seek pharmacological treatment as a
19 solution to managing their child's disruptive behaviors in the
20 classroom; and

21 WHEREAS, family physicians are probably the most frequent
22 prescribers of stimulant drugs and antidepressant drugs, but do
23 not necessarily have the experience or training to accurately
24 diagnose behavioral health disorders;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested
2 to convene a task force to study the potential misuse and
3 overuse of prescription drugs in dealing with children's
4 behavioral problems in school; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include
6 representation from the public education department, the
7 children's health program of the university of New Mexico,
8 pediatricians, child psychiatrists, pharmacists and others with
9 special knowledge and experience in child health and welfare;
10 and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force identify
12 alternative approaches to prescription medication, including
13 nutrition and vitamin supplementation, and evaluate the safety
14 and effectiveness of these approaches; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that approaches be identified to
16 promote regular exercise and participation in sports in schools
17 as a way to channel disruptive behavior in more positive
18 directions; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that public outreach efforts to
20 better educate physicians, parents, classroom teachers and
21 school counselors about the potential dangers of prescription
22 drugs and alternative approaches to disruptive behavior be
23 developed; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that recommendations be developed
25 regarding appropriate observation and examination of children

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1 prior to suggesting treatment with pharmaceutical agents; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and
3 recommendations of the task force be presented to the
4 legislative health and human services committee and the
5 legislative education study committee at their respective
6 October 2005 meetings; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
8 sent to the department of health, the public education
9 department and statewide organizations representing
10 pediatricians and psychiatrists.

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