47th legislature - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 53

Steve Komadina

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT TO LEAD A STUDY TO ASSESS NEW MEXICO'S APPROACH TO PROVIDING SERVICES AND TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

WHEREAS, in 2003, over five thousand child victims of domestic violence received services in New Mexico, and the number continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, multiple research studies have shown that children exposed to domestic violence are likely to be violent themselves, misuse drugs and alcohol, be depressed and suicidal and repeat the cycle of domestic violence when they become teenagers, engaging in physical, emotional and sexual dating violence patterns; and

WHEREAS, children chronically exposed to domestic violence . 155347.1

between their parents or caretakers may also be victims of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, the negative effects on children from exposure to domestic violence include emotional distress, somatic complaints, developmental delays or regression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, aggression, delinquency, anxiety and social withdrawal; and

WHEREAS, efforts to strengthen, enhance and expand services for children and adult victims of domestic violence can reduce violence in the home, increase positive health outcomes and help counteract the overall negative effects of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, a study of services available in New Mexico to treat children exposed to domestic violence would assist the department of health, the children, youth and families department and other community groups to better coordinate and improve such services, leading to a more comprehensive continuum of care available and accessible to all traumatized children and their families;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the children, youth and families department be requested to lead a study surveying and assessing New Mexico's approach to providing services and treatment for children exposed to domestic violence; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study perform an assessment of services available to treat children exposed to domestic violence in each county in New Mexico and identify the emerging best practices from around the country that address the physical and psychological health and safety concerns for children in violent households; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study investigate the need for legislative changes in New Mexico's criminal and child welfare laws to enhance how children exposed to domestic violence get help and develop ways to assist both non-abusing parents and perpetrators in obtaining assistance with substance abuse and parenting issues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include the cooperation of interested advocacy groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health and the children, youth and families department report the results of the study, including any legislative recommendations, to the interim legislative health and human services committee by November 1, 2005; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the department of health, the children, youth and families department and the chair of the interim legislative health and human services committee.

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