

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO SENTENCING COMMISSION TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON SERVICES AND PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT OFFENDER REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION AND REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF RECIDIVISM.

WHEREAS, the vast majority of convicted criminals do not remain in prison but return to the world outside and to the communities from which they came; and

WHEREAS, studies show that within three years of release, sixty-seven percent of former prisoners are rearrested and fifty-two percent are reincarcerated for crimes committed in our communities; and

WHEREAS, due to New Mexico's need for additional prison beds, a medium-security, six-hundred-bed correctional facility is being constructed in the town of Clayton and will house state prisoners at a projected cost to the state of over seventeen million five hundred thousand dollars (\$17,500,000) per year; and

WHEREAS, the corrections department projects that current prison facilities, including the new Clayton facility, will be at or over capacity by the summer of 2009; and

WHEREAS, a New Mexico sentencing commission report estimates that, based on current inmate population growth, New Mexico will need a new six-hundred-bed correctional facility

every three years; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico needs to improve the effectiveness of facilitating the reentry and reintegration of persons with criminal convictions into its communities; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico needs to rehabilitate persons with criminal convictions in order to reduce the incidence of recidivism and violence in its communities; and

WHEREAS, community services, adequate housing, gainful employment and other programs are necessary to reintegrate prisoners, reduce recidivism rates and provide for the responsible early release of nonviolent prisoners;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico sentencing commission be requested to study and make recommendations for needed community services and programs, including housing, that support offender rehabilitation and reintegration into our communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission study and make recommendations on programs and services needed to effectuate a reduction in recidivism rates and to provide support for the early release of nonviolent offenders into the community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committee no later than November 2007; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico legislative council and the New Mexico sentencing commission.