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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/13/07

SPONSOR Hall LAST UPDATED _____ HB HJM 20

SHORT TITLE Support Heart Gallery & Consider Adopting SB _____

ANALYST Hanika Ortiz

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Joint Memorial 20 urges New Mexicans to support the Heart Gallery of New Mexico and consider adopting a New Mexico child.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

House Joint Memorial 20 provides the following:

- At any one time, between eight hundred and nine hundred children are in the care of the children, youth and families department awaiting adoption into loving families.
- In an effort to increase the number of children adopted into their "forever families", the children, youth and families department in 2001 sponsored the nation's first heart gallery exhibit; and the professional exhibit of portraits of children awaiting adoption raised awareness among caring parents and potential parents of the need to step forward and provide loving, permanent homes to New Mexico children.
- The creation of the heart gallery of New Mexico inspired more than forty other states to hold or plan similar heart gallery openings, which will ultimately lead to thousands of successful adoptions around the country.
- The successful efforts of the heart gallery of New Mexico pushed New Mexico's adoption rate well above the national rate but, despite that success, fewer than half the children awaiting adoption in state care each year find their "forever families".

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The Legislature further resolves that it applauds the efforts of CYFD and the Heart Gallery of New Mexico and urges New Mexicans to consider adopting a child into their family.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The Legislature requests that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to CYFD.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The History of the Heart Gallery of New Mexico:

On March 29, 2001, at the suggestion of Santa Fe photographer and adoptive mother Cathy Maier Callanan, the New Mexico CYFD brought the expression "a picture is worth a thousand words" to life at the nation's first Heart Gallery exhibit. The reception at Santa Fe's Gerald Peters Gallery drew a crowd of people inspired by stirring portraits of children in CYFD custody who were dreaming of finding their "forever families." The portraits were created and donated by some of the region's most talented photographers.

Since then, the annual Heart Gallery of New Mexico has found homes for many children who were considered "hard to place" due to their age or the fact that they were members of a sibling group. One of the happiest endings came in June 2005, when a very special portrait inspired one couple to adopt five teenaged siblings. Two photographers even "clicked with" and adopted their charming subjects.

Thanks to media coverage and technical support from CYFD, the Heart Gallery spread to several other states. In January 2005, a Parade article about the project by Santa Fe reporter Rosemary Zibart touched the hearts of millions of readers, resulting in a virtual explosion of Heart Gallery groups across America, where 118,000 foster children are waiting to be adopted. Later coverage included People, the Today Show, CNN, MSNBC, USA Weekend, the New York Times, ABC World News Tonight and 20/20.

Currently 42 states have held or are planning Heart Gallery openings, and the number of Heart Gallery-inspired placements in the end should number in the thousands. CYFD continues to be the conduit for the positive energy of these dedicated planners. The federal Children's Bureau's adoption initiative "The Collaboration to Adopt US Kids," has been a strong supporter of the project, and has named the Heart Gallery a "best practice." On November 1, 2005, they hosted the first National Heart Gallery exhibit at Union Station in Washington, D.C. CYFD is playing an integral role in this milestone event. Please visit adoptuskids.org for more information on The Heart Gallery as a national movement.

AHO/nt