

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE THE TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FOR PERSONS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS CREATED IN THE 2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION BY HOUSE MEMORIAL 41 AND SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 4.

WHEREAS, the legislature created the task force on employment barriers for persons with criminal convictions in the first session of the forty-eighth legislature; and

WHEREAS, the work of that task force is not yet complete but remains critically important; and

WHEREAS, the task force was created in order to improve the effectiveness of facilitating the reentry of persons with criminal convictions into communities, reducing the incidence of recidivism and helping those with criminal convictions attain skills and connections to achieve a successful reentry into their communities; and

WHEREAS, the task force should review clearance regulations for all state agencies and local public bodies to evaluate whether existing barriers to successful reentry into the workplace are related to the safety, trust and responsibility required at a job and to determine whether a less restrictive approach could protect the public while preserving employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the task force should also develop and

administer, in coordination with the New Mexico municipal league and the New Mexico association of counties, a survey to obtain information from local public bodies, community colleges and state-funded universities on how their hiring practices could affect persons with criminal convictions; and

WHEREAS, the task force should review admissions and other community college and state-funded university requirements to ensure that persons with criminal convictions are not prohibited from attending or taking classes, or selecting career paths; and

WHEREAS, the task force should investigate and develop a proposal for a New Mexico civic justice conservation corps and community custody program to provide full-time paid opportunities for people transitioning out of prison; and

WHEREAS, the task force should also study the effectiveness of establishing an independent office of advocacy that is administratively attached to the workforce solutions department and the possibility of establishing a commission to oversee the office of advocacy; and

WHEREAS, the task force should, if feasible, host a public sector job fair in collaboration with the state personnel office, the corrections department, the city of Albuquerque and Bernalillo county to assist persons with criminal convictions in obtaining employment and pursuing career paths;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of workforce solutions be encouraged to continue to convene, staff and participate with the task force on employment barriers for persons with criminal convictions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to present its findings and recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committee no later than November 1, 2008, including its recommendations on lifting statutory barriers to public employment, waiver or review mechanisms available to persons with convictions and reforms and changes that may be adopted to remove barriers and enable offenders to demonstrate their rehabilitation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of workforce solutions, current task force participants, the superintendent of regulation and licensing and the director of the personnel board.