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HOUSE MEMORIAL 66

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2010

INTRODUCED BY

Antonio "Moe" Maestas

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP
LEGISLATION TO REDUCE THE STATE'S HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE BY
CREATING A SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDIT PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME
STUDENTS AND BY ESTABLISHING A COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FOR
INNOVATIVE EFFORTS BY EDUCATION PROVIDERS.

WHEREAS, the economic future of the state of New Mexico
will depend upon the educational attainment and knowledge base
of its work force; and

WHEREAS, the secretary of public education said that forty
thousand New Mexico students have dropped out of high school in
the last four years; and

WHEREAS, the governor said that a forty-six percent high
school dropout rate is unacceptable; and

WHEREAS, the house of representatives believes that

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1 aggressive work is needed to ensure that all children in New
2 Mexico attend a school that will transform their lives by
3 helping them to achieve their full potential; and

4 WHEREAS, the employment prospects for students without a
5 high school diploma are bleak; and

6 WHEREAS, Hispanic students represent fifty-six percent of
7 the total enrollment in New Mexico public schools, and there
8 exists a persistent and substantial gap in academic achievement
9 between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic Anglo students in
10 the state; and

11 WHEREAS, states like Florida have sharply reduced this
12 achievement gap through innovative education programs,
13 including a scholarship tax credit program; and

14 WHEREAS, more than fifty percent of the students enrolled
15 in public schools in New Mexico qualify for free or reduced-
16 price lunches; and

17 WHEREAS, the educational options available to low-income
18 students are narrower given their families' modest incomes; and

19 WHEREAS, a scholarship tax credit program would allow
20 these families to send their children to the public or private
21 school best suited to their educational needs; and

22 WHEREAS, the savings from a well-designed scholarship tax
23 credit could be used to provide grants to public and private
24 education providers to help minority students finish their
25 studies and obtain a high school diploma;

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