

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SENATE MEMORIAL 57

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

Lynda M. Lovejoy

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE INTERIM LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH A SUBCOMMITTEE TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES
AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES TO
DEVELOP AN INFRASTRUCTURE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND
SERVICES.

WHEREAS, most people would agree that in order for a
community to do well, its children must do well; and

WHEREAS, although many children in New Mexico are doing
well, many others are struggling, having fallen behind during
their early childhood years; and

WHEREAS, children who live in poverty, or who live in
areas lacking resources and opportunities, often lag behind
other children and have a difficult time catching up; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2010 kids count data book, about

underscored material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 one-fourth of all New Mexicans live in poverty, and close to
2 one-half of their children live in extreme poverty; and

3 WHEREAS, New Mexico is home to twenty-two tribes,
4 including nineteen pueblos, the Navajo Nation and two Apache
5 tribes, and to many Native Americans who live off-reservation
6 throughout the state; and

7 WHEREAS, twelve percent of all children in New Mexico
8 between the ages of birth and five years old are Native
9 American, and many of them live in isolated, rural areas of the
10 state; and

11 WHEREAS, these children are among those most in need of
12 high-quality, comprehensive, early childhood care and education
13 to ensure their readiness for kindergarten through grade
14 twelve; and

15 WHEREAS, according to a December 2009 report of the
16 children, youth and families department titled "New Mexico's
17 Early Learning Systems", the sovereign, self-governing pueblos,
18 tribes and nations of New Mexico vary considerably from one
19 another in language, government, judicial structure, custom and
20 traditions; and

21 WHEREAS, a disproportionate percentage of Native American
22 children face the challenges of poverty and school failure; and

23 WHEREAS, according to the Indian education status report
24 for 2006-2007 prepared by the public education department, only
25 thirty-eight percent of Indian children are proficient in

.186026.1

underscored material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 reading and only twenty-seven percent are proficient in math in
2 third grade; and

3 WHEREAS, the status report also reveals that, despite
4 efforts to decrease the number of student dropouts, the Native
5 American drop-out rate increased over a three-year period for
6 grades seven and eight; and

7 WHEREAS, Native American children who face disadvantages
8 in early childhood and who live in poverty experience a
9 disproportionate level of health problems, including a higher
10 incidence of infant mortality, obesity, substance abuse and
11 suicide and a shorter life span than children in better-
12 supported areas of the state; and

13 WHEREAS, a widely shared objective is to ensure that every
14 child in New Mexico has an equal opportunity for success in
15 school and has access to an integrated and high-quality system
16 of early learning experiences; and

17 WHEREAS, New Mexico has a number of early childhood
18 programs and policies to support this objective, including home
19 visiting programs; child care assistance; the teacher education
20 and compensation helps (T.E.A.C.H.) early childhood program;
21 pre-kindergarten, kindergarten plus and K-3 plus programs; the
22 family, infant and toddler program; and generous medicaid and
23 children's health insurance programs known as New MexiKids; and

24 WHEREAS, despite the existence of these valuable programs,
25 and despite attempts to coordinate efforts through the

.186026.1

underscored material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 establishment of Native American advisory committees, Native
2 American liaison positions and other approaches, only pockets
3 of success have been achieved among New Mexico's Native
4 American populations; and

5 WHEREAS, although laudable, efforts to extend early
6 childhood programs and services to the pueblos, tribes and
7 nations of New Mexico have not resulted in a reliable and
8 comprehensive system of early programs and services; and

9 WHEREAS, there has been little attention paid, outside of
10 the pueblos, tribes and nations themselves, to develop the
11 necessary infrastructure to support such a comprehensive system
12 of early childhood programs and services;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
14 OF NEW MEXICO that the interim legislative health and human
15 services committee be requested to establish a subcommittee to
16 identify opportunities for Native American communities to
17 develop an infrastructure of early childhood programs and
18 services; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the subcommittee seek
20 testimony and recommendations from agencies and other entities
21 in New Mexico that have been engaged in addressing this
22 identified need, including the children, youth and families
23 department, the children's cabinet, the Indian affairs
24 department, the department of health's office of school and
25 adolescent health, the public education department, New Mexico

.186026.1

underscoring material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 voices for children, the early childhood action network and
2 others with expertise in early childhood development and
3 education; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the subcommittee request
5 testimony regarding available federal and grant funding that
6 could be obtained to develop an infrastructure of early
7 childhood programs and services for Native Americans; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
9 transmitted to the chair of the interim legislative health and
10 human services committee.