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SENATE MEMORIAL 1

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

INTRODUCED BY

Cynthia Nava

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING SEPTEMBER 8, 2011 "EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION DAY" IN THE NEW MEXICO SENATE, REQUESTING THAT THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SEEK AN INCREASE IN FEDERAL FUNDING AND REQUESTING POLICYMAKERS TO SEEK FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THAT ALL NEW MEXICO CHILDREN GET ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES.

WHEREAS, according to the national scientific council on the developing child, babies' brain development is rapid and the architecture that lays the foundation for future success is shaped before children enter kindergarten; and

WHEREAS, many new parents need skills and support to learn how to foster brain development and provide high-quality interactions as children's first teachers; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States department of

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1 education, New Mexico ranks forty-ninth in the United States
2 for the percentage of fourth graders who read proficiently; and

3 WHEREAS, the Annie E. Casey foundation reports that New
4 Mexico ranks forty-seventh in the United States for the
5 percentage of teens who do not finish high school; and

6 WHEREAS, according to a recent United States census study,
7 fifty-one percent of New Mexico's children live in low-income
8 households; and

9 WHEREAS, poverty is a key risk factor for a child's
10 achievement in school, and educational attainment is a key
11 determinant to a child's future economic security; and

12 WHEREAS, evaluations by Rutgers university of high-quality
13 early learning programs show that they improve outcomes for
14 children in elementary and secondary schools; and

15 WHEREAS, prevention is more effective and less costly than
16 remediation; and

17 WHEREAS, research published in the *Journal of Public*
18 *Economics* by noted economists shows that investing in early
19 childhood development for disadvantaged children and their
20 families provides a ten percent return on investment each year
21 throughout the child's life through increased personal
22 achievement and social productivity; and

23 WHEREAS, less than twenty percent of children from birth
24 to age five have access to New Mexico's early childhood
25 programs, including home visiting, high-quality child care and

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1 the New Mexico pre-kindergarten program, which helps children
2 to be ready to learn in school; and

3 WHEREAS, funding for early childhood services accounts for
4 less than one percent of the state's general fund budget and,
5 overall, the amount of federal and state funding available to
6 children and families has been reduced over the last three
7 years; and

8 WHEREAS, only five percent of families with newborn babies
9 get state-funded services that provide parent coaching or home
10 visiting; and

11 WHEREAS, the state's most recent pre-kindergarten program
12 evaluation showed measurable gains in literacy and mathematics
13 skills for children who participated in child care assistance
14 programs; and

15 WHEREAS, only sixteen percent of New Mexico's four-year-
16 olds had access to participate in child care assistance
17 programs during the 2010-2011 school year; and

18 WHEREAS, funding for child care assistance programs in the
19 state was reduced by twenty-three percent between fiscal years
20 2011 and 2012; and

21 WHEREAS, since fiscal year 2010, the state has reduced
22 payments to child care providers and has increased parents'
23 copayments; and

24 WHEREAS, more than sixty-eight percent of New Mexico
25 families with children rely on child care to work or attend

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1 school, and eligibility for child care assistance has been
2 reduced so that six thousand children are on the state's
3 waiting list for child care assistance;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
5 OF NEW MEXICO that September 8, 2011 be declared "Early
6 Childhood Care and Education Day" in the senate; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New Mexico's congressional
8 delegation be requested to seek increased federal funding for
9 early childhood care and education in the state; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that policymakers be requested to
11 ensure that all New Mexico children get access to high-quality
12 early childhood care and education programs and services that
13 will provide them with the opportunity to thrive and find
14 success in school and become productive members of their
15 communities; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that high-quality early childhood
17 care and education programs and services be recognized as
18 critically important to the health, well being and economic
19 vitality of all New Mexico communities; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the communities and
21 organizations that are currently providing high-quality early
22 childhood care and education be commended; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state agencies and tribal,
24 county, municipal and other governmental entities be urged to
25 support the improvement of the accessibility and quality of

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1 early childhood care and education services; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
3 transmitted to the governor and to the members of New Mexico's
4 congressional delegation.

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