

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 505

51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013

Tracking Number: .192817.1

Short Title: CYFD NM Young Fathers Project

Sponsor(s): Senator Linda M. Lopez

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: March 8, 2013

Bill Summary:

SB 505 makes an appropriation for the New Mexico Young Fathers Project to promote social and family stability by:

- improving the quality of father-child relationships in young families; and
- preventing repeat pregnancies.

Fiscal Impact:

\$50,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for expenditure in FY 14. Any expended or unencumbered funds remaining at the end of FY 14 revert to the General Fund

Substantive Issues:

According to CYFD:

- the US Census Bureau reports that 24 million children in the United States (roughly 33 percent) do not have a biological father living with them in the home;
- national research from the National Fatherhood Initiative shows that a father's absence affects the child in terms of:
 - poverty;
 - maternal and child health;
 - incarceration;
 - crime;
 - teen pregnancy;
 - child abuse;
 - alcohol abuse;
 - education; and
 - childhood obesity; and
- in New Mexico there are few services whose primary mission is fatherhood involvement.

According to the New Mexico Young Fathers Project website:

- the Young Fathers Project helps young fathers under the age of 26;
- participants:
 - receive individual case management and mentorship;
 - learn life skills in groups with other young fathers;
 - receive training in parenting, relationship skills, and decision-making; and
- learn to navigate systems that impact their families and improve employment outcomes.

Background:

During the 2012 interim, the LESC heard testimony from the executive director of New Mexico Graduation, Reality, and Dual-role Skills (GRADS) instructional program; and the principal of New Futures School (NSF) in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) district. Although the testimony centered on pregnant and parenting teen mothers, the importance of responsibility among teen fathers was a recurring topic of importance.

To illustrate, the GRADS testimony noted, among other points, that:

- young women who had been teen mothers were 38 percent less likely than other young women to earn a high school diploma by age 22; and
- teens who gave birth before the age of 18 were 22 percent less likely to receive a high school diploma than teens who gave birth after their 18th birthday.

In addition, the Principal of NFS related the history of the school, noting that, before NFS established a school building in 1988, students either withdrew or dropped out of school as a result of their pregnancy. With its own facility, however, the school now provides daycare that allows parents, both mothers and fathers, to interact with their children in a safe, caring environment; and it allows teen parents additional time to catch up on any missed work.

Committee Referrals:

SPAC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 382aa *Excused School Absences for Pregnancy* (Identical to HB 300a)
HB 300a *School Excused Absences for Pregnancy* (Identical to SB 382aa)