

1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 DECLARING OCTOBER "DISABILITY HISTORY AND AWARENESS MONTH";  
3 RECOMMENDING DISABILITY HISTORY AND AWARENESS INSTRUCTION IN  
4 PUBLIC SCHOOLS DURING OCTOBER OF EACH YEAR.

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6 WHEREAS, according to the United States census, at least  
7 forty-nine million Americans live with a disability; and

8 WHEREAS, in the past, it was common for people with  
9 disabilities to be segregated and institutionalized; and

10 WHEREAS, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth  
11 centuries, a "eugenics" movement led to laws and practices  
12 that caused people with disabilities to be institutionalized  
13 and sterilized; and

14 WHEREAS, after American soldiers returned home from  
15 World War I with disabilities sustained during service, laws  
16 were passed to provide them vocational rehabilitation; and

17 WHEREAS, thereafter, multiple private foundations were  
18 established by people with disabilities or their advocates to  
19 spread awareness about and obtain services for people with  
20 disabilities, including the American foundation for the blind  
21 founded by Helen Keller and the national paraplegia  
22 foundation founded by the paralyzed veterans of America; and

23 WHEREAS, immediately after World War II, President  
24 Harry S. Truman signed into law a "National Employ the  
25 Handicapped Week", which led to state and local committees

1 promoting the competence of people with disabilities; and

2 WHEREAS, after World War II, workers exposed the abusive  
3 conditions at the mental health institutions in which they  
4 served during the war and founded the national mental health  
5 foundation; and

6 WHEREAS, the 1950s and 1960s civil rights movement that  
7 sought to address inequities in the treatment of African  
8 Americans and others accelerated the change in perceptions  
9 about another significant population of people treated  
10 unequally, namely, people with disabilities; and

11 WHEREAS, in the 1960s, laws and local practices led to  
12 more access to public buildings and transportation for people  
13 with physical disabilities; and

14 WHEREAS, in 1972, the commonwealth of Virginia ceased  
15 its forced sterilization program for people with  
16 disabilities; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1972, two United States district courts  
18 ruled that public schools could not exclude disabled  
19 children, and in 1975, the federal Education of All  
20 Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was enacted, later renamed  
21 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, requiring  
22 free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive  
23 setting; and

24 WHEREAS, in the 1970s, twenty years after Mary Switzer,  
25 director of the United States office of vocational

1 rehabilitation, emphasized independent living as a  
2 quality-of-life issue, centers for independent living were  
3 established to empower people with disabilities by providing  
4 necessary support services without institutionalization so  
5 that people could remain in their homes and communities; and

6 WHEREAS, a monumental shift in disability public policy  
7 resulted from the passage of Section 504 of the federal  
8 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which banned discrimination on  
9 the basis of disability by recipients of federal funds and  
10 was modeled after laws that banned race, ethnic origin and  
11 gender-based discrimination by federal fund recipients; and

12 WHEREAS, in enacting the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,  
13 congress adopted the viewpoint that the inferior social and  
14 economic conditions of people with disabilities were not a  
15 consequence of the disability itself, but rather a result of  
16 societal barriers and prejudices; and

17 WHEREAS, after the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the  
18 exclusion and segregation of people with disabilities became  
19 viewed legally as discrimination; and

20 WHEREAS, a 1986 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of  
21 1973 defined supported employment for people with  
22 disabilities as a "legitimate rehabilitation outcome"; and

23 WHEREAS, the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988  
24 prohibited housing discrimination against people with  
25 disabilities; and

1           WHEREAS, in 1990, congress passed the Americans with  
2 Disabilities Act; and

3           WHEREAS, in New Mexico, the disabilities concerns  
4 subcommittee of the legislative health and human services  
5 committee was created in 2010 to focus on the concerns and  
6 needs of people with disabilities; and

7           WHEREAS, despite gains in awareness about people with  
8 disabilities since the time of forced institutionalization  
9 and sterilization and widespread discrimination and  
10 marginalization, there remain significant impediments to the  
11 acceptance and integration of people with disabilities; and

12           WHEREAS, people with disabilities continue to face a  
13 significantly lower level of income and a likelihood of  
14 living in poverty; and

15           WHEREAS, education is needed to dispel persisting myths,  
16 stigmas and stereotypes that persist about people with  
17 disabilities;

18           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
19 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the month of October be designated  
20 "Disability History and Awareness Month"; and

21           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board of each school  
22 district and the governing body of each charter school in the  
23 state be requested to encourage each school to provide  
24 disability history and awareness instruction in grades  
25 kindergarten through twelve every October; and

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, during disability history  
2 and awareness month, students be provided instruction to  
3 expand their knowledge, understanding and awareness of  
4 individuals with disabilities, the history of disability and  
5 the disability rights movement; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that disability history  
7 instruction include the events and time lines of the  
8 development and evolution of services to, and the civil  
9 rights of, individuals with disabilities; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the contributions of  
11 specific individuals with disabilities, including  
12 acknowledged state and national leaders, be recognized; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that disability awareness  
14 instruction be integrated into existing school curricula by  
15 supplementing lesson plans, inviting classroom and assembly  
16 speakers with experience or expertise on disabilities or by  
17 providing other school activities related to disabilities;  
18 and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that disability awareness  
20 instruction be delivered by qualified school personnel or by  
21 knowledgeable guest speakers, including people with  
22 disabilities; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the goals of disability  
24 history and awareness instruction include:

25 A. instilling in students a sensitivity toward

1 fellow students with disabilities and encouraging educational  
2 cultures that nurture safe and inclusive environments for  
3 students with disabilities in which bullying is discouraged  
4 and respect and appreciation for students with disabilities  
5 is encouraged;

6 B. a discussion of disability as a natural part of  
7 the human experience, in which individuals are more alike  
8 than different;

9 C. an acknowledgment that, regardless of  
10 disability, each citizen is afforded the same rights and  
11 responsibilities as every other citizen;

12 D. the creation of a more inclusive school  
13 community, where students with disabilities are included in  
14 every aspect of society and every student is acknowledged for  
15 the student's unique gifts, talents and contributions; and

16 E. a reaffirmation of the local, state and federal  
17 commitment to the full inclusion in society of and the equal  
18 opportunity for all individuals with disabilities; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education  
20 department be requested to encourage each school board to use  
21 an established disability curriculum that incorporates the  
22 goals for disability history and awareness instruction; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each school district and  
24 charter school be encouraged to exercise innovation to  
25 accomplish the goals of disability history and awareness

1 instruction; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state higher education  
3 institutions be encouraged to conduct and to promote  
4 activities on each campus to provide education, understanding  
5 and awareness of individuals with disabilities; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
7 transmitted to the secretary of public education, the director  
8 of the vocational rehabilitation division of the public  
9 education department, the secretary of human services, the  
10 superintendent of the New Mexico school for the deaf, the  
11 superintendent of the New Mexico school for the blind and  
12 visually impaired, the superintendent of the New Mexico  
13 military institute and the executive director of the New  
14 Mexico commission for the blind. \_\_\_\_\_

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