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SENATE MEMORIAL 96

51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013

INTRODUCED BY

Benny Shendo, Jr.

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT A TASK FORCE BE CONVENED TO STUDY THE CREATION
OF A HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FOR AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS.

WHEREAS, American Indians enroll in, attend and graduate
from college at proportionately lower rates than any other
ethnic group in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the average annual salary of American Indian high
school graduates without a bachelor degree is twenty thousand
seven hundred twenty-one dollars (\$20,721) and with a bachelor
degree is forty-five thousand two hundred fourteen dollars
(\$45,214); and

WHEREAS, the receipt of a college education and degree
benefits more than the individual in an American Indian
community, where members serve as role models and mentors to
others; and

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1 WHEREAS, American Indian populations experience a more
2 difficult transition to college life than other populations,
3 where the perspective of the majority governs academic and
4 student life; and

5 WHEREAS, American Indians in the state receive the lottery
6 tuition scholarship at proportionately lower rates than other
7 student populations; and

8 WHEREAS, American Indian populations experience a higher
9 rate of poverty than other populations, which can render
10 college cost-prohibitive; and

11 WHEREAS, tuition waiver programs for American Indians
12 exist in other states, including Colorado, Kansas, Maine,
13 Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana and Oklahoma, but not in this
14 state; and

15 WHEREAS, American Indian students would benefit from a
16 dedicated scholarship fund to use when they are ready for
17 college; and

18 WHEREAS, fourteen tribes have gaming compacts with the
19 state pursuant to the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act
20 requiring the tribes to share with the state part of their
21 gaming revenues; and

22 WHEREAS, in 2012, the state's share of the tribes' gaming
23 revenues was sixty-eight million three hundred thousand dollars
24 (\$68,300,000), which the tribes paid in accordance with the
25 revenue-sharing provisions of the gaming compacts;

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1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
2 OF NEW MEXICO that the Indian affairs department be requested
3 to form a task force to study the creation of a higher
4 education scholarship fund for American Indian students who are
5 state residents; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be co-chaired
7 by the secretary of Indian affairs or the secretary's designee
8 and the director of American Indian student services at the
9 university of New Mexico, who shall appoint as members of the
10 task force:

11 A. a representative from the legislative education
12 study committee;

13 B. a representative from the institute of American
14 Indian arts;

15 C. a representative from Navajo technical college;

16 D. a representative from Dine college;

17 E. a representative from southwestern Indian
18 polytechnic institute;

19 F. a representative from central New Mexico
20 community college;

21 G. a representative from northern New Mexico
22 college;

23 H. three representatives from the eight northern
24 Indian pueblos council;

25 I. three representatives from the ten southern

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1 pueblos council;

2 J. a representative from the Navajo Nation; and

3 K. a representative from the higher education
4 department; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force study the
6 feasibility, economic impact and benefits of:

7 A. funding a higher education scholarship fund with
8 ten percent of the state's share of the tribes' gaming revenues
9 each year for American Indian students who are state residents;
10 and

11 B. permitting students to use the scholarship at
12 out-of-state or private higher educational institutions;
13 provided that the scholarship amount is capped at an amount
14 charged for attendance at an in-state public institution of
15 higher education; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
17 transmitted to the Indian affairs department, the American
18 Indian student services at the university of New Mexico, the
19 institute of American Indian arts, the legislative education
20 study committee, Navajo technical college, Dine college,
21 southwestern Indian polytechnic institute, central New Mexico
22 community college, northern New Mexico college, the eight
23 northern Indian pueblos council, the ten southern pueblos
24 council, the Navajo Nation and the higher education department.