

1 A MEMORIAL

2 EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE "TROUBLED
3 TEEN" INDUSTRY AND REQUESTING THAT THE NEW MEXICO
4 CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REFORM
5 RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT AND YOUTH BOOT CAMP PROGRAMS
6 NATIONWIDE.

7
8 WHEREAS, residential treatment and youth boot camp
9 programs have existed for several decades as a last resort
10 treatment option for children with behavioral and mental
11 health issues; and

12 WHEREAS, families turn to these programs when in need of
13 more assistance than traditional inpatient mental health
14 services or therapy programs are able to offer; and

15 WHEREAS, many residential treatment programs have
16 successfully helped children with severe behavioral problems;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, the industry consists of facilities that
19 advertise that they can help troubled teens but, in fact, may
20 use methods that include physical and emotional abuse; and

21 WHEREAS, the "troubled teen" industry is made up of many
22 for-profit, unregulated residential treatment programs that
23 promise to instill discipline, responsibility and personal
24 change in "troubled" youth; and

25 WHEREAS, some programs employ a widely discredited

1 method of "behavior modification" of lesbian, gay, bisexual
2 and transgender youth, also known as gay conversion therapy;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, some programs do not differentiate between
5 troubled teen and normal teenage behavior; and

6 WHEREAS, some programs accept adolescents into the teen
7 program; and

8 WHEREAS, concerns have been raised about the possible
9 violation of the rights of children in some residential
10 treatment programs; and

11 WHEREAS, a 2008 United States government accountability
12 office report on residential facilities documented widespread
13 reports of abuse and death in a variety of such programs,
14 which abuse included the excessive use of physical
15 restraints, severe methods of intimidation, starvation,
16 neglectful medical practices and physical abuse; and

17 WHEREAS, the report also documented that thirty-four
18 states had reported more than one thousand five hundred staff
19 members involved in incidents of child abuse or neglect in
20 2005; and

21 WHEREAS, in 2006, at least twenty-eight states reported
22 at least one death in a youth residential treatment program;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, the United States government accountability
25 office also found that untrained staff, lack of adequate

1 nourishment and reckless operating practices have all
2 contributed to deaths of teenagers in these programs; and

3 WHEREAS, there are no statistics tracking the outcomes
4 of these programs; and

5 WHEREAS, in New Mexico, the children, youth and families
6 department provides for licensing of residential treatment
7 centers but does not license short-term facilities such as
8 youth boot camps; and

9 WHEREAS, concerns have been raised about whether
10 children in some facilities have been prevented from
11 communicating freely with family members or other
12 authorities; and

13 WHEREAS, there are inadequate safeguards to prevent
14 unnecessary placement of children in these facilities; and

15 WHEREAS, bipartisan legislation has been introduced in
16 the United States house of representatives to reform
17 residential treatment and youth boot camp programs
18 nationwide; and

19 WHEREAS, federal legislation could help prevent these
20 abusive boot camps from shutting down in one state and
21 reopening in another under a different name; and

22 WHEREAS, federal legislation will require states to
23 establish standards that are at least as strict as federal
24 standards; and

25 WHEREAS, federal legislation will require states to

1 develop policies that ensure that every program is properly
2 licensed and in compliance with license requirements;

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
4 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that support be
5 expressed for increased awareness of the troubled teen
6 industry; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico congressional
8 delegation be requested to support legislation to reform
9 residential treatment and youth boot camp programs
10 nationwide; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
12 transmitted to the office of the governor, the office of the
13 attorney general, the secretary of children, youth and
14 families, the administrative office of the courts and each
15 member of the New Mexico congressional delegation.