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SENATE MEMORIAL 69

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2016

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

A MEMORIAL

CONGRATULATING FRANCES RAMIREZ-MAESTAS ON HER RETIREMENT FROM
THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE.

WHEREAS, Frances Ramirez-Maestas, director of the
legislative education study committee, retired from state
government at the end of 2015; and

WHEREAS, she has been a fixture as legislative staff for
almost twenty years; in fact, she came the same year as
Senators Leavell, Lopez and Payne; and

WHEREAS, Frances became the director of the legislative
education study committee in 2008, after having served as
deputy director for eight years; and

WHEREAS, as a boss, Frances expected high-quality,
nonpartisan, objective work from her staff, and she expected
her staff to be responsive to committee members and other

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1 legislators and legislative staff, regardless of party
2 affiliation; and

3 WHEREAS, she also recognized that her staff had lives
4 outside the office, and she tried whenever possible to give
5 them the time they needed when major life events intruded; and

6 WHEREAS, she was always quick to defend her staff against
7 disrespect or mistreatment by lobbyists, other staff members or
8 even legislators; and

9 WHEREAS, anyone who knows Frances knows of her great
10 passion for public education, as well as her very well-defined,
11 deep-rooted sense of right and wrong; and

12 WHEREAS, Frances has always been eager to assist anyone
13 even remotely interested in public education and has been just
14 as eager to convert any nonbelievers; and

15 WHEREAS, Frances made it her mission, and her pleasure, to
16 tout the New Mexico legislature's foresight in creating the
17 only permanent joint legislative interim committee on public
18 education, and she made other states aware of this legislative
19 emphasis as well as the state's funding formula, which was one
20 of the first in the nation to be an equalized state funding
21 formula based on equity and fairness; and

22 WHEREAS, she was not just part of the staff of the 2005-
23 2008 funding formula study task force, but a vital resource and
24 source of institutional memory during that study of public
25 school funding in New Mexico and the development of a new,

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1 simpler funding formula; and

2 WHEREAS, she served with distinction on several national
3 education committees, including the national conference of
4 state legislatures, where she served as chairwoman of the
5 education staff section; and

6 WHEREAS, she was instrumental in setting up the
7 legislative education staff network, a partnership between the
8 national conference of state legislatures and the education
9 commission of the states, that serves as a research tool
10 through which any legislative staff member in any state can
11 post a query and have it answered by counterparts throughout
12 the country; and

13 WHEREAS, Frances' many years of dedication to public
14 education and education policy has been recognized nationally
15 by the national conference of state legislatures, the education
16 commission of the states and the legislative education staff
17 network and in-state by the New Mexico coalition of school
18 administrators, which awarded her the Earl Nunn memorial award
19 in 2012; and

20 WHEREAS, for one award, her staff noted as one of her
21 accomplishments that she "consistently supports public
22 education by insisting that schools, school districts and the
23 public education department adhere to the requirements of law;
24 opposes unfair or unwarranted assaults on schools, whether
25 fiscal or programmatic; and reminds all involved that whatever

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1 is done must benefit children first"; and

2 WHEREAS, before those important awards, and others, came
3 to her, it is important to note that Frances Ramirez was Las
4 Cruces Junior LULAC Girl of the Year in 1966 and 1967, New
5 Mexico-Texas State LULAC Girl of the Year in 1967 and, at the
6 national convention in Phoenix, Arizona, was selected as the
7 1967 National LULAC Girl of the Year; and

8 WHEREAS, Frances is very proud of her Isleta-Hispanic
9 familial roots, and she lives her life by the values she was
10 taught by her family and her religion; and

11 WHEREAS, Frances is also justifiably proud of all she has
12 accomplished for schoolchildren in New Mexico;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
14 OF NEW MEXICO that it notes its appreciation of the many years
15 of service provided to the legislature by Frances Ramirez-
16 Maestas in helping to shape New Mexico's public education
17 funding and programmatic policy and working to ensure that the
18 legislature's will was being implemented and enforced and that
19 the fiscal playing field for public school funding was
20 equitable and fair; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the senate extends its best
22 wishes to Frances for an enjoyable retirement.