

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A  
3 REGIONAL DENTAL SCHOOL STUDY GROUP TO INVESTIGATE THE  
4 FEASIBILITY OF CREATING A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW MEXICO AND  
5 THE TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY WOODY L. HUNT SCHOOL OF DENTAL  
6 MEDICINE IN EL PASO, TEXAS.

7  
8 WHEREAS, New Mexico has no dental school, despite being  
9 the thirtieth-largest state by population and the  
10 fifth-largest state by area; and

11 WHEREAS, every dentist in New Mexico received dental  
12 education outside of the state; and

13 WHEREAS, most New Mexico students attend dental school  
14 through the western interstate commission for higher  
15 education or other contract program schools in cities such as  
16 Omaha, Kansas City, Denver, Phoenix and Dallas, and their  
17 individual student debt is typically at or about the national  
18 average of two hundred eighty-seven thousand dollars  
19 (\$287,000) upon graduation, which discourages their return to  
20 locations with less lucrative practices in rural New Mexico;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, New Mexico has a world-class medical school at  
23 the university of New Mexico, which encourages the diversity  
24 of physicians and their ability to serve the unique cultures  
25 of New Mexico using programs like the successful bachelor of

1 arts and doctor of medicine program; and

2 WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico has shown success  
3 in oral health education, including both an advanced general  
4 dental residency program and a graduate-level dental hygiene  
5 program; and

6 WHEREAS, while New Mexico as a whole does not have a  
7 shortage of dental providers, it does have a significant  
8 challenge attracting dental providers to southern and eastern  
9 parts of the state, consistent with a general regional  
10 shortage in the Permian basin area; and

11 WHEREAS, cultural, gender and ethnic diversity in the  
12 dental workforce should reflect the populations that it  
13 serves, and New Mexico has the second-highest percentage of  
14 Hispanic dentists in the nation at twelve and six-tenths  
15 percent; and

16 WHEREAS, the number of Hispanic, Native American and  
17 female dentists in the state falls short of their relative  
18 distribution in the state's population; and

19 WHEREAS, Texas tech university is opening a dental  
20 school with its successful medical school located in El Paso,  
21 Texas, with a class of sixty in 2021 and plans for future  
22 expansion; and

23 WHEREAS, schools in Texas have among the lowest rates of  
24 tuition among American dental schools and corresponding lower  
25 rates of student indebtedness; and

1           WHEREAS, creating a dental school in New Mexico is  
2 cost-prohibitive and difficult to justify based on the  
3 state's current need, and investment in a regional program  
4 whose mission includes serving the state's goals is practical  
5 and attainable; and

6           WHEREAS, creating a relationship between New Mexico and  
7 the Texas tech university's upcoming dental school has the  
8 potential to not only improve the diversity and distribution  
9 of New Mexico dental school graduates but might also allow  
10 cooperation between the existing dental programs to provide  
11 enhanced services and practice opportunities in New Mexico;

12           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
13 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the higher education department be  
14 requested to convene a regional dental school study group to  
15 investigate the feasibility of creating a relationship  
16 between New Mexico and the Texas tech university Woody L.  
17 Hunt school of dental medicine located in El Paso, Texas; and

18           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of higher  
19 education be requested to invite to join the regional dental  
20 school study group representatives from the New Mexico board  
21 of dental health care, the New Mexico dental association, the  
22 university of New Mexico dental programs and the university  
23 of New Mexico health sciences center administration to  
24 provide insight into dental education, licensing and existing  
25 programs to expand the diversity of New Mexico's health care

1 workforce; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include an  
3 assessment of barriers to dental workforce diversity and  
4 rural care, the efficacy of the Texas tech university Woody  
5 L. Hunt school of dental medicine to address these barriers  
6 and the financial requirements of creating a regional dental  
7 school relationship; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the regional dental school  
9 study group be requested to develop as part of its report a  
10 program to pursue an appropriate relationship with the Texas  
11 tech university Woody L. Hunt school of dental medicine to  
12 educate qualified New Mexico students to serve New Mexico  
13 communities and populations that are currently underserved;  
14 and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the higher education  
16 department and regional dental school study group be  
17 requested to present their findings to the legislative  
18 finance committee and other appropriate interim legislative  
19 committees by December 1, 2019; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
21 transmitted to the secretary of higher education and the chair  
22 of the legislative finance committee. \_\_\_\_\_

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