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HOUSE MEMORIAL 17

**56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024**

INTRODUCED BY

Eleanor Chávez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING SOCIAL WORKERS PRACTICING IN NEW MEXICO TO ADOPT PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR COMPETENT PRACTICE.

WHEREAS, the mission of New Mexico highlands university's Facundo Valdez school of social work's center for excellence in social work is to collaborate with students, practitioners, educators and community and organizational leaders statewide to respond to the evolving needs of New Mexico's diverse and multicultural people, families and communities for the advancement of racial, environmental, social and economic justice for equitable outcomes for all; and

WHEREAS, the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of those who are vulnerable, oppressed and living

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1 in poverty; and

2 WHEREAS, the council on social work education recognizes  
3 and calls for rectifying the disparities in social, economic,  
4 racial and environmental justice that lead to inequities in  
5 access to education, health care, political representation and  
6 other opportunities; and

7 WHEREAS, the council on social work education acknowledges  
8 that environmental justice issues are connected to social  
9 justice issues, and legislation is critically needed to ensure  
10 that no group or community is excluded from pertinent  
11 environmental policy decisions, suffers a disproportionate  
12 impact from environmental hazards or lacks access to available  
13 environmental resources; and

14 WHEREAS, the council on social work education emphasizes  
15 that for competent practice, social workers must understand  
16 that ethics are informed by principles of human rights,  
17 critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in  
18 society and analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that  
19 advance human rights and social, racial, economic and  
20 environmental justice; and

21 WHEREAS, New Mexico residents are hard-hit by  
22 environmental inequities, injustices and climate change, with  
23 twenty-eight of its thirty-three counties designated as drought  
24 disaster zones by the United States department of agriculture;  
25 and

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1           WHEREAS, the federal substance abuse and mental health  
2 services administration has identified indigenous people,  
3 communities of color, refugees, immigrants, people experiencing  
4 poverty, senior citizens, children, people who are unhoused and  
5 people with behavioral health needs as disproportionately  
6 affected by environmental disasters; and

7           WHEREAS, social workers are frontline responders who help  
8 individuals, families and communities overcome trauma, grief  
9 and displacement from natural disasters such as wildfires,  
10 drought and flooding; and

11           WHEREAS, the United States bureau of labor statistics  
12 identifies a total of four thousand two hundred forty social  
13 workers employed in community and social service occupations in  
14 New Mexico; and

15           WHEREAS, approximately one thousand six hundred nine  
16 undergraduate and graduate students from four accredited  
17 universities, New Mexico highlands university, western New  
18 Mexico university, New Mexico state university and eastern New  
19 Mexico university, and throughout New Mexico are in the social  
20 work workforce pipeline; and

21           WHEREAS, social workers stand ready to help society  
22 overcome current and pressing needs;

23           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
24 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that, for competent  
25 practice, all social workers in New Mexico be requested to

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1 adopt and practice in alignment with the following established  
2 principles of environmental justice:

3 A. the right to freedom from ecological  
4 destruction;

5 B. the affirmation of ecological unity and the  
6 interdependence of all species;

7 C. the right to freedom from all forms of  
8 discrimination or bias;

9 D. that public policy be based on mutual respect  
10 and justice for all people;

11 E. the right to ethical, balanced and responsible  
12 uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of  
13 maintaining a sustainable planet;

14 F. the fundamental right to clean air, land, water  
15 and food;

16 G. universal protection from nuclear testing,  
17 extraction and production and disposal of toxic or hazardous  
18 wastes and poisons;

19 H. the fundamental right of all people to  
20 political, economic, cultural and environmental self-  
21 determination;

22 I. the cessation of production of all toxins,  
23 hazardous wastes and radioactive materials and that past and  
24 current producers be held accountable for detoxification and  
25 containment at the point of production;

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1           J. the right of all people to participate as equal  
2 partners at all levels of decision making, including needs  
3 assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and  
4 evaluation;

5           K. the right of workers to a safe and healthy work  
6 environment;

7           L. the right to quality health care;

8           M. the right of victims of environmental injustice  
9 to receive full compensation and reparations for damages;

10          N. that governmental acts of environmental  
11 injustice violate international law, including the Universal  
12 Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the  
13 Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;

14          O. recognition of the special relationship of  
15 Native American people to the United States government through  
16 treaties, agreements, compacts and covenants affirming  
17 sovereignty and self-determination;

18          P. the need for urban and rural ecological policies  
19 to clean up and rebuild cities and rural areas in balance with  
20 nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all communities,  
21 with fair access to the full range of resources for all;

22          Q. strict enforcement of principles of informed  
23 consent and the end of testing of experimental reproductive and  
24 medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color;

25          R. opposition to the destructive operations of

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1 multinational corporations;

2 S. opposition to military occupation and repression  
3 and the exploitation of lands, people, cultures and all life  
4 forms;

5 T. educating present and future generations with an  
6 emphasis on social and environmental issues based on diverse  
7 cultural perceptions; and

8 U. that individuals make conscious lifestyle  
9 choices to prioritize the health of the natural world for  
10 present and future generations by consuming as little as  
11 possible and producing as little waste as possible; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
13 transmitted to the boards of regents of New Mexico highlands  
14 university, eastern New Mexico university, western New Mexico  
15 university and New Mexico state university.

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