

SENATE MEMORIAL 16

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026

INTRODUCED BY

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This document may incorporate amendments proposed by a committee, but not yet adopted, as well as amendments that have been adopted during the current legislative session. The document is a tool to show amendments in context and cannot be used for the purpose of adding amendments to legislation.

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY, DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AND DRAFT LEGISLATION FOR COLLECTING DATA ON PARENTING STUDENTS IN THE NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, in 2023, New Mexico had the third highest poverty rate in the nation, and an estimated forty-six percent of households were below the asset limited, income constrained,

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employed threshold; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's labor force participation rate is lower than the United States average; and

WHEREAS, labor force participation rates increase as educational attainment increases; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, one in three New Mexico college students were parents or were expecting to be parents according to a survey conducted by Santa Fe community college's early childhood center of excellence; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, New Mexico's child poverty rate was nearly twenty-three percent; and

WHEREAS, on average, the children of mothers who complete a degree are more likely to graduate high school and get a college degree themselves; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity scholarship and government results and opportunity program fund funding have opened new pathways to educational attainment for adult learners in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, through the programs, the New Mexico legislature has demonstrated a commitment to providing necessary supports and resources for adult learners to succeed; and

WHEREAS, even with these measures, parenting students have unique barriers to college completion and struggle to find resources to overcome those barriers; and

WHEREAS, there are currently no standardized methods of

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identifying parenting students and their barriers to success or developing targeted strategies for improving their educational outcomes in New Mexico higher education institutions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SEC ➔~~HOUSE OF~~
~~REPRESENTATIVES~~ ➔ SEC SEC ➔ ~~SENATE~~ ➔ SEC OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO
that the higher education department be requested to convene a task force to study, develop recommendations for and draft legislation for collecting data on parenting students; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include the following members:

- A. staff from at least two four-year public higher education institutions, including institutional research and student services staff;
- B. staff from at least two two-year community colleges, including institutional research and student services staff;
- C. staff from a tribal college or university;
- D. parenting students from at least two public colleges or universities;
- E. a member of the children's cabinet;
- F. a representative from the data advisory group of the higher education department; and
- G. a representative from the New Mexico student parent alliance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force prepare a

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report containing a definition of "parenting student", meaning a student who is the parent or legal guardian of a dependent child or children, including biological, step, foster, adopted or other children for whom the student has primary caregiving responsibilities, that can be used by higher education institutions in the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report contain an assessment of the current status of parenting student data collection and recommendations for implementing statewide data collection for higher education institutions, including suggested consistent question phrasing and modes of data collection that routinely assess parenting status over the length of students' enrollment, such as collecting parenting status data each academic term as part of the higher education department's end of semester and degree reporting submissions, or through other regular data-collection mechanisms that allow higher education institutions to assess parenting status throughout the span of students' enrollment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present its report and recommendations to the legislative health and human services committee and other appropriate legislative interim committees by November 1, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor and the secretary of higher education.