

A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING NEW MEXICO HISTORY IN
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND REQUESTING THE STATE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO CREATE A
NEW MEXICO HISTORY CURRICULUM.

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WHEREAS, gaining a sense of history is a gradual and cumulative process and, therefore, the study of history should begin early and continue throughout a student's educational career; and

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WHEREAS, if students study New Mexico history, they will become familiar with the development and expansion of the state, which will enable them to better understand the present relationship between the multiple cultures of this state, between this state and other states of the United States, between this state and the United States and between New Mexico and other countries; and

WHEREAS, if students have a foundation of basic United States history and of New Mexico history, they can better understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens of the state of New Mexico and the United States and as a part of the global community; and

WHEREAS, the 1998 national assessment of educational progress civics assessment showed that one-third of fourth graders could not explain the meaning of "I pledge allegiance to the flag" on a multiple-choice test, and a majority of fourth graders could not answer why "citizens elect people to make laws for them" in a democracy; and

WHEREAS, it is important for students to be able to identify crucial events in

United States history and in New Mexico history in order to make informed decisions;
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WHEREAS, distinguished historians and educators fear that without a common civic memory and a common understanding of the remarkable individuals, events and ideals that have shaped this state, people in the state will risk losing much of what it means to be New Mexicans; and

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WHEREAS, such understanding is necessary for the fair treatment of all of New Mexico's citizens and for the reconciliation of differences; and

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WHEREAS, the understanding fostered by the study of New Mexico history will help to preserve the state's unique blend of multiple cultures and traditions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the importance of teaching New Mexico history in elementary and secondary schools be recognized; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state department of public education be requested to create a task force, including a representative from the office of the state historian, to create a functional New Mexico history curriculum framework, including defining and developing user-friendly resources, teacher training assistance and support materials; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report to an appropriate interim legislative committee before the second session of the forty-sixth legislature; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the state department of public education and the New Mexico legislative council.