

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 64

46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO
ADDRESS THE UNDER-USE OF FOOD STAMPS IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has the highest rate of poverty in the
nation, with nearly eighteen percent of its people living in
poverty; and

WHEREAS, twenty-five percent of the children in New Mexico
live in poverty and eleven percent of New Mexico's children
live in extreme poverty, putting New Mexico first in the nation
in child poverty; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has the highest rate of food
insecurity in the nation with fourteen percent of its people
having limited or uncertain access to enough food and is third-
highest in the nation with five percent of New Mexicans not
being able to afford enough food; and

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1 WHEREAS, the food stamp program is the nation's best
2 defense against hunger and food insecurity, and data from the
3 2000 federal census indicate that as many as seventy-six
4 thousand New Mexico families with children are eligible for
5 food stamps, but only fifty-eight percent of these households
6 participate in the food stamp program; and

7 WHEREAS, it is estimated that increasing the enrollment of
8 eligible families receiving food stamps to eighty percent would
9 bring forty-two million dollars (\$42,000,000) in additional
10 food stamp benefits to New Mexico; and

11 WHEREAS, the benefits of participation in the food stamp
12 program ripple outward from the families who use food stamps to
13 the local businesses where families spend their money, the
14 businesses that supply goods and services to local businesses
15 and the people who are employed by those businesses; and

16 WHEREAS, the expanded use of food stamps by a greater
17 number of families with children would create at least six
18 hundred new jobs;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department be
21 requested to develop a plan to significantly increase the use
22 of food stamps in New Mexico; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department
24 collaborate with organizations that serve the hungry and food
25 insecure and with organizations that advocate for the relief of

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1 hunger and food insecurity in developing that plan; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in developing that plan the
3 human services department consider simplifying the food stamp
4 enrollment form, training department staff to ensure that the
5 program is as accessible as possible, exploring and developing
6 ways to provide out-station food stamp enrollment options such
7 as senior centers, food banks, public health offices and
8 community centers, marketing the program to underserved
9 populations, including the elderly and working families with
10 children, and considering changing the name of the program to
11 reduce the social stigma sometimes associated with the program;
12 and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department
14 present that plan and report progress in addressing the under-
15 use of the food stamp program to the legislative health and
16 human services committee prior to November 30, 2003; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
18 transmitted to the secretary of human services.

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