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HOUSE MEMORIAL 02

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

Ray Begaye

A MEMORIAL

URGING CONGRESS TO ENSURE THAT NEW MEXICO'S STUDENTS ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND BY UNFUNDED MANDATES IN THE FEDERAL NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT.

WHEREAS, New Mexico's students are among the poorest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, over one-half of the people in New Mexico speak a language other than English in the home and many students entering public school are non-English speaking; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a shortage of highly qualified teachers, especially in areas of extreme poverty and where English proficiency is limited; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires even students who enter school speaking a language other than English to become proficient by federal standards; and

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1 WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires all
2 teachers in core subject areas to meet federal standards as
3 "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-2006 school year; and

4 WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act has not yet
5 been fully funded and, in fact, has never been funded to pay
6 for even fifty percent of the programs and requirements that it
7 mandates; and

8 WHEREAS, neither the "letter of the law" nor the goals of
9 the federal No Child Left Behind Act can be achieved without
10 adequate funding; and

11 WHEREAS, New Mexico schools and educators will face
12 sanctions, including school closures, if student performance is
13 not adequate, even if funding is woefully inadequate; and

14 WHEREAS, New Mexico students who are improving and whose
15 schools are improving should not face disruption because of
16 failure to meet a federal standard that is set without funding
17 essential to achieve that standard; and

18 WHEREAS, New Mexico taxpayers are already required to take
19 on the additional financial burden imposed by federal standards
20 even though a federal mandate deserves adequate federal
21 funding; and

22 WHEREAS, estimates from other states that do not share New
23 Mexico's language challenges indicate that the federal No Child
24 Left Behind Act requires an additional expenditure per student
25 between five hundred seventy-five dollars (\$575) and one

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1 thousand thirty-two dollars (\$1,032), although federal funding
2 has provided only between seven dollars (\$7.00) and seventy-
3 seven dollars (\$77.00) per student; and

4 WHEREAS, New Mexico taxpayers have demonstrated their
5 devotion to educational progress and respect for cultural and
6 language differences by their support for funding increases for
7 public education and for altering the state constitution to
8 support educational initiatives; and

9 WHEREAS, New Mexico taxpayers have increased their support
10 for full-day kindergarten programs and other initiatives to
11 improve the chances for success of children before they enter
12 first grade; and

13 WHEREAS, the people of this state are investing in
14 education for their students and do not want their schools
15 disrupted by federal educational agencies that oversee but are
16 not adequately funded for improvements in education;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
18 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the time has
19 come for the United States congress to fund the lofty mandates
20 of the No Child Left Behind Act or to accept a measure of
21 responsibility for failing to achieve them; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New Mexico's congressional
23 representatives be advised that their support for full funding
24 or relaxed standards is expected by New Mexico taxpayers; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

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1 transmitted to the secretary of public education, to all New
2 Mexico school districts, to the members of the New Mexico
3 congressional delegation, to the president of the United States
4 and to the United States secretary of education.

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