

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF CORRECTIONS TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO IMPLEMENT AND DESIGN EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THE FEMALE POPULATION IN THE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Senate Joint Memorial 48 passed by the 2002 legislature, the corrections department developed a task force to examine issues relating to female inmates and their increasing incarceration and recidivism rates; and

WHEREAS, the task force was directed to review classification policies and procedures; the use of administrative segregation; policies and procedures for protecting female inmates from sexual assault and harassment; adequacy of medical and mental health services; and policies and procedures concerning parole and discharge planning for female inmates; and

WHEREAS, the task force found that women are profoundly different from men in the criminal justice arena and have different pathways to crime that result from childhood and adult abuse, trauma, mental health issues and severe substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, the task force found that women have different offense patterns from men, different life and family circumstances, different learning and communication styles and different needs and strengths and thus require different

services, treatment and environments for their rehabilitation;
and

WHEREAS, national research shows that women in correctional facilities have fewer major misconduct reports than men and that misconduct by women is generally much less serious than misconduct by men; and

WHEREAS, the task force found that sexual misconduct by correctional staff is a significant and hidden problem in female correctional facilities at the national level and requires further evaluation in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the task force found great potential for improvement in the treatment and rehabilitation of women inmates if New Mexico embraces the national research on the differences between female and male inmates and implements the national guidelines for gender-responsive facilities and services; and

WHEREAS, the task force resolved to take immediate and long-term actions to address its findings on how to more effectively rehabilitate women inmates and respond to issues specific to women in the corrections system; and

WHEREAS, many of the actions proposed by the task force have not been implemented;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of corrections assemble a task force consisting of the warden

of the New Mexico women's correctional facility in Grants, the warden of the Camino Nuevo correctional center, representatives from the corrections corporation of America, correctional medical services, the adult probation and parole division of the corrections department, the children, youth and families department, the New Mexico women's justice project, the commission on the status of women, the archdiocese of Santa Fe, the judiciary, central New Mexico community college, a rape crisis center, the New Mexico district attorneys association, community practitioners in behavioral health and substance abuse treatment, former women inmates who have completed their sentences, including any probation or parole, and other interested and appropriate parties to implement the recommendations of the Senate Joint Memorial 48 task force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force review the environment, programs, services, policies and procedures at the two female correctional facilities, including intake, classification, screening and assessment, discharge planning, vocational skill development, mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse services, interpersonal violence and trauma, parenting and family connections, visitation, gender-informed training protocols, staff training, sexual misconduct and compliance with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force assist in implementing the recommendations of the national institute of corrections and work with a representative of the institute, if feasible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force encourage community collaborations and partnerships to create innovative and unique solutions for the female inmate population and to improve the readiness of women to reintegrate back into their communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the task force report to the appropriate interim legislative committee during the 2008 interim on the progress of the task force; the implementation of recommendations made by the 2002 Senate Joint Memorial 48 task force and of the national guidelines for gender-responsive facilities and services; and any further findings, recommendations and solutions that may be effective for the female prison population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of corrections, the warden of the women's correctional facility in Grants, the warden of the Camino Nuevo correctional center, the corrections corporation of America, the secretary of children, youth and families, the administrative office of the courts, the second judicial district attorney, the New Mexico women's justice project, the commission on the status of women, the archdiocese of Santa Fe

and central New Mexico community college.