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HOUSE MEMORIAL 3

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2008

INTRODUCED BY

Gail Chasey

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

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

6 WHEREAS, the task force found that women have different
7 offense patterns from men, different life and family
8 circumstances, different learning and communication styles and
9 different needs and strengths and thus require different
10 services, treatment and environments for their rehabilitation;
11 and

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

16 WHEREAS, the task force found that sexual misconduct by
17 correctional staff is a significant and hidden problem in
18 female correctional facilities and requires further evaluation
19 in New Mexico; and

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

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

5 WHEREAS, many of the actions proposed by the task force
6 have not been implemented and the environment, programs,
7 policies and procedures at the women's correctional facility in
8 Grants and at the Camino Nuevo correctional center continue to
9 be based on the male corrections model;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
11 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary
12 of corrections assemble a task force consisting of the warden
13 of the New Mexico women's correctional facility in Grants, the
14 warden of the Camino Nuevo correctional center, representatives
15 from the corrections corporation of America, correctional
16 medical services, the adult probation and parole division of
17 the corrections department, the children, youth and families
18 department, the New Mexico women's justice project, the
19 commission on the status of women, the archdiocese of Santa Fe,
20 the judiciary, central New Mexico community college, a rape
21 crisis center, the second judicial district attorney's office,
22 community practitioners in behavioral health and substance
23 abuse treatment, former women inmates who have completed their
24 sentences, including any probation or parole, and other
25 interested and appropriate parties to implement the

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1 recommendations of the Senate Joint Memorial 48 task force; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force review the
3 environment, programs, services, policies and procedures at the
4 two female correctional facilities, including intake,
5 classification, screening and assessment, discharge planning,
6 vocational skill development, mental health, behavioral health
7 and substance abuse services, interpersonal violence and
8 trauma, parenting and family connections, visitation, gender-
9 informed training protocols, staff training, sexual misconduct
10 and compliance with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act of
11 2003; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force implement the
13 recommendations of the national institute of corrections and
14 work with a representative of the institute, if feasible; and

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

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the task force
21 report to the appropriate interim legislative committee during
22 the 2008 interim on the progress of the task force; the
23 implementation of recommendations made by the 2002 Senate Joint
24 Memorial 48 task force and of the national guidelines for
25 gender-responsive facilities and services; and any further

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1 findings, recommendations and solutions that may be effective
2 for the female prison population; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
4 transmitted to the secretary of corrections, the warden of the
5 women's correctional facility in Grants, the warden of the
6 Camino Nuevo correctional center, the corrections corporation
7 of America, the secretary of children, youth and families, the
8 administrative office of the courts, the second judicial
9 district attorney, the New Mexico women's justice project, the
10 commission on the status of women, the archdiocese of Santa Fe
11 and central New Mexico community college.

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