

A MEMORIAL

ENCOURAGING EFFORTS TO EXPAND NEW MEXICO'S FOOD STAMP ENROLLMENT AND RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FEDERAL FOOD STAMP PROGRAM TO NEW MEXICO'S ECONOMY.

WHEREAS, the federal food stamp program has been renamed the "supplemental nutrition assistance program" and is called "SNAP"; and

WHEREAS, the name change and other important changes will become effective October 1, 2008; and

WHEREAS, low-income New Mexicans are encouraged to apply for food stamps not only because food stamps improve nutrition for New Mexico families, but also because food stamps help New Mexico's economy; and

WHEREAS, the federal government funds all food stamp benefits; and

WHEREAS, in June 2008 alone, New Mexico's ninety-seven thousand nine hundred eighty-nine food stamp cases generated over twenty-two million dollars (\$22,000,000) in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, many people eligible for food stamps are not enrolled and benefits will increase because of federal changes; and

WHEREAS, more New Mexicans would benefit if New Mexico joined Arizona, Texas and thirteen other states in eliminating

or greatly increasing financial asset limits for food stamps and, thus, encourage savings; and

WHEREAS, community partners and organizations can assist with food stamp enrollment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department be urged to develop and implement additional outreach efforts to encourage all eligible low-income New Mexicans to apply for food stamp benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department be urged to increase the use of community partners and organizations to assist with food stamp enrollment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department be urged to join the other fifteen states that have raised or eliminated the financial asset limit allowed for families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department be urged to increase the use of telephone eligibility interviews and further simplify the enrollment process for food stamps; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department be encouraged to provide information about food stamp eligibility in English and Spanish for all low-income comprehensive tax rebate clients and provide information on how to apply for food stamps; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department report to the legislative health and human services committee by its November 2009 meeting on the department's efforts and plans to enroll more food stamp clients and the results it has seen from such efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of human services and the chair of the legislative health and human services committee.