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HOUSE MEMORIAL 81

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

Henry 'Kiki' Saavedra

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE NEED FOR SOCIAL WORKERS, THE COST OF GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND THE NEED FOR STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS.

WHEREAS, loan forgiveness programs encourage future professionals to pursue certain fields of study by offsetting incurred loan debt with payments for certain work-related requirements that must be fulfilled by the student borrower; and

WHEREAS, according to the board of social work examiners, New Mexico had only three thousand five hundred social workers licensed at the master's level in 2008; and

WHEREAS, according to the workforce solutions department, a beginning master's level social worker earns an average of .178279.1

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1 twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) per year, but graduates
2 with an average debt of twenty-six thousand seven hundred
3 dollars (\$26,700); and

4 WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2008, an estimated eighty thousand
5 two hundred fifty-four consumers were served with mental health
6 services, according to the annual report of the interagency
7 behavioral health purchasing collaborative; and

8 WHEREAS, as a group, social workers are traditionally the
9 largest provider of mental health services; and

10 WHEREAS, the New Mexico health policy commission manages a
11 geographic access data system that collects and reports
12 information on the distribution of selected health
13 professionals in rural and underserved areas to inform policy
14 decisions regarding the need for health professionals in those
15 areas; and

16 WHEREAS, data regarding the availability or need for
17 social workers is not included in that geographic access data
18 system;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
20 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department
21 of health and the children, youth and families department be
22 requested to conduct a study to determine the need for social
23 workers, the cost of graduate social work education and the
24 need for student loan forgiveness for social workers; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify current

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1 shortages of social workers, particularly in rural areas; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health and
3 the children, youth and families department collaborate with
4 the New Mexico health policy commission to identify the steps
5 necessary to include social workers in the geographic access
6 data system; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study develop criteria for
8 awarding student loan forgiveness to social work students; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health and
10 the children, youth and families department consult with the
11 New Mexico chapter of the national association of social
12 workers and an association representing social work students in
13 conducting the study; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and
15 recommendations of this study be presented to the interim
16 legislative health and human services committee by October 1,
17 2009; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the secretary of health and the secretary of
20 children, youth and families.

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