

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION TO CREATE THE
3 DRUG POLICY TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE NEW MEXICO'S CURRENT
4 APPROACHES TO DRUG POLICY THROUGH THE USE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT,
5 TREATMENT, PREVENTION AND HARM REDUCTION AND TO DEVELOP
6 STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE CHANGE.

7
8 WHEREAS, New Mexico has long been concerned about
9 substance abuse and its impact on the people of New Mexico;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, addiction is a chronic medical illness that is
12 treatable, and drug treatment success rates exceed those of
13 many cancer therapies; and

14 WHEREAS, according to a recent report issued by the
15 federal substance abuse and mental health services
16 administration, an estimated fifty-five thousand New Mexicans
17 need but are not receiving treatment for an illicit drug use
18 problem and another one hundred twenty-four thousand need
19 treatment for alcohol abuse; and

20 WHEREAS, according to the Pew research center, more than
21 one out of every one hundred Americans is incarcerated, and a
22 recent United States department of justice report states that
23 an estimated five hundred thousand people are incarcerated
24 for a drug law violation nationally; and

25 WHEREAS, at the end of 2007, more than seven million

1 three hundred thousand Americans, which is approximately one
2 in every thirty-one adults, were incarcerated or on probation
3 or parole, and roughly one-third of these were under
4 correctional supervision for a drug law violation; and

5 WHEREAS, the average cost of substance abuse treatment
6 in New Mexico is one thousand two hundred ninety-five dollars
7 (\$1,295) per person per year, and the cost of incarcerating
8 one person in either jail or prison averages twenty-seven
9 thousand eight hundred thirty-seven dollars (\$27,837) per
10 year; and

11 WHEREAS, New Mexico spent approximately twenty-two
12 million dollars (\$22,000,000) to incarcerate nonviolent drug
13 possession offenders in 2007; and

14 WHEREAS, of the approximately five thousand six hundred
15 people in New Mexico's state prison system in 2002,
16 approximately eighty-seven percent were assessed as needing
17 substance abuse services and seventy percent as substance
18 abusing or dependent; and

19 WHEREAS, according to a study by the RAND corporation,
20 every one dollar (\$1.00) invested in substance abuse
21 treatment results in a savings to taxpayers of more than
22 seven dollars (\$7.00) through reduced societal costs of
23 crime, violence and loss of productivity; and

24 WHEREAS, the national treatment improvement evaluation
25 study shows substantial reductions in criminal behavior, with

1 a sixty-four percent decrease in all arrests after treatment,
2 making public safety a primary beneficiary of effective drug
3 treatment programs; and

4 WHEREAS, federal, state and local costs of the war on
5 drugs exceed forty billion dollars (\$40,000,000,000)
6 annually, yet drugs are still widely available in every
7 community, drug use and demand have not decreased and most
8 drug prices have fallen while purity levels have increased
9 dramatically; and

10 WHEREAS, according to the office of national drug
11 control policy, only thirty-five percent of the federal drug
12 control budget is spent on education, prevention and
13 treatment combined, with the remaining sixty-five percent
14 devoted to law enforcement efforts; and

15 WHEREAS, cities and states across the country have
16 experienced a rise in violent crime and must prioritize
17 scarce law enforcement resources; and

18 WHEREAS, many New Mexico teachers, prevention
19 specialists and school districts are using effective and
20 science-based drug prevention strategies that focus on
21 building resiliency and honest communication with young
22 people about drug use; and

23 WHEREAS, over one-third of all HIV/AIDS cases and nearly
24 two-thirds of all new cases of hepatitis C in the United
25 States are linked to injection drug use with contaminated

1 syringes, now the single largest factor in the spread of
2 HIV/AIDS in the country; and

3 WHEREAS, African Americans, Latinos and other minorities
4 use drugs at rates comparable to Caucasians, yet
5 non-Caucasians face disproportionate rates of arrest and
6 incarceration for drug law violations among persons convicted
7 of drug felonies in state courts; and

8 WHEREAS, according to the corrections department, one in
9 ninety Hispanic men aged eighteen or older, one in thirty-one
10 African American men aged eighteen or older and one in
11 twenty-five African American men aged twenty to thirty-four
12 are currently incarcerated in New Mexico; and

13 WHEREAS, the drastic change in sentencing laws in the
14 last quarter century has led to a seven hundred percent
15 increase in the incarceration of women, with drug law
16 violations accounting for one-third of the increase; and

17 WHEREAS, in order to promote the successful reentry into
18 society of people leaving prison or jail, New Mexico must
19 provide them with job training, transitional housing, family
20 reunification services, behavioral health treatment and the
21 restoration of voting rights; and

22 WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to be a national leader in
23 effective, public health-based drug policies, as demonstrated
24 by its 1997 enactment of the Harm Reduction Act, which
25 created statewide syringe exchange programs, and the

1 department of health's 2001 overdose prevention and response
2 initiative; and

3 WHEREAS, the use of a four pillar approach to drug
4 policy, incorporating law enforcement, treatment, prevention
5 and harm reduction, can save both lives and money in New
6 Mexico;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
8 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the Robert Wood Johnson foundation
9 center for health policy be requested to create a drug policy
10 task force to evaluate New Mexico's approach to alleviating
11 the negative consequences associated with the use of alcohol
12 and other drugs; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the drug policy task force
14 utilize a four pillar approach to examine prevention,
15 treatment, harm reduction and enforcement and develop
16 strategies for effective change in New Mexico's drug policy;
17 and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the drug policy task force
19 include representation from the office of the governor, the
20 office of the lieutenant governor, the corrections
21 department, the department of health, the children, youth and
22 families department, the human services department, the
23 public education department, designees appointed by the New
24 Mexico legislative council, the legislative finance
25 committee, the DWI grant council, the aging and long-term

1 services department, county detention facilities, the
2 administrative office of the courts, the department of public
3 safety, the interagency behavioral health purchasing
4 collaborative, the behavioral health planning council, the
5 university of New Mexico, the New Mexico association of
6 counties, the drug policy alliance, the New Mexico women's
7 justice project, two individuals with criminal drug
8 convictions and two individuals in recovery from substance
9 abuse; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the drug policy task force
11 be chaired by a representative from the Robert Wood Johnson
12 foundation center for health policy and that it meet at the
13 call of the chair at least three times before October 15,
14 2010; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the drug policy task force
16 write a comprehensive statewide strategic plan based on the
17 four pillar approach and report and present its findings to
18 the interim legislative health and human services committee,
19 the interim legislative courts, corrections and justice
20 committee and the legislative finance committee by November
21 2010; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the strategic plan include a
23 section on current approaches to drug policy, including the
24 number and geography of people impacted, local and statewide
25 assessments of services and needs, a detailed list of

1 expenditures in prevention, treatment, harm reduction and
2 enforcement and an assessment of the effectiveness of the
3 current programs; a section on prevention recommendations;
4 and a section on treatment recommendations; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force develop a
6 list of evaluation measures to include the impact of drug
7 abuse on youth, rates of drug overdose fatalities, rates of
8 HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, access to treatment, the number of
9 incarcerated nonviolent drug law offenders, access to
10 alternatives to incarceration and racial disparities
11 exacerbated by the criminal justice system; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the strategic plan place
13 special emphasis on the sections on prevention and treatment
14 and establish short- and long-term recommendations to reduce
15 the impact of drug use and drug policies on the people of New
16 Mexico by utilizing cost-effective initiatives; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the written report include
18 objectives to address drug overdose fatalities, HIV/AIDS and
19 hepatitis, access to treatment, the number of incarcerated
20 nonviolent drug law offenders, alternatives to incarceration
21 and racial disparities exacerbated by the criminal justice
22 system; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
24 transmitted to the director of the Robert Wood Johnson
25 foundation center for health policy and to each of the

1 agencies or organizations named to participate in the task

2 force. _____

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