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HOUSE MEMORIAL 35

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2010

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE CREATION OF A STATEWIDE TASK FORCE TO ASSESS AND
RECOMMEND POLICY OPTIONS TO ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC SECURITY AND
HEALTH OF NEW MEXICO WOMEN AND FAMILIES; REQUESTING THE
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS DEPARTMENT TO PERFORM A STATEWIDE SURVEY OF
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.

WHEREAS, economic security is one of the building blocks
necessary for individuals, families and communities to have a
healthy and fulfilling quality of life; and

WHEREAS, to be economically secure means to have
unconditional and consistent access to stable and supportive
employment, quality education, safe housing, safe communities,
nutritious food, health care, social services and social
justice; and

WHEREAS, when individuals, families and communities are

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1 economically secure, they are physically and mentally healthy
2 and are able to thrive in their own environments; and

3 WHEREAS, public policy at the local, state and national
4 levels can be created to ensure economically secure lives; and

5 WHEREAS, when individuals, families and communities are
6 not economically secure, negative health outcomes result,
7 affecting women and their families, particularly women and
8 families of color; and

9 WHEREAS, according to the former New Mexico labor
10 department's 2000 survey of employee benefits in Albuquerque,
11 only thirty-six percent of employers offered paid maternity
12 leave benefits to full-time workers; twenty-three percent of
13 employers offered paid benefits to part-time workers; and fifty
14 percent of employers offered paid sick leave to full-time
15 employees; and

16 WHEREAS, despite the economic downturn and the economy's
17 negative impact on some businesses, employers still find it
18 hard to find and retain skilled employees; and

19 WHEREAS, women are more likely to work part time and have
20 lower incomes; and

21 WHEREAS, women's health status falls as their family
22 income levels fall; and

23 WHEREAS, women with lower incomes suffer
24 disproportionately from chronic disease, disability, mental
25 health issues and poor health; and

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1 WHEREAS, approximately sixteen million seven hundred
2 thousand women are uninsured nationwide; and

3 WHEREAS, uninsured women are more likely to lack adequate
4 access to care and have poorer health outcomes; and

5 WHEREAS, a lack of insurance further heightens economic
6 insecurity; and

7 WHEREAS, race and ethnicity are important determinants of
8 economic security; and

9 WHEREAS, the state of New Mexico ranks third-highest in
10 the nation for the percentage of persons below the federal
11 poverty level; and

12 WHEREAS, New Mexico's median annual income for women is
13 ranked forty-second in the nation; and

14 WHEREAS, fourteen and two-tenths percent of all New
15 Mexicans have incomes below the federal poverty level; and

16 WHEREAS, thirteen and two-tenths percent, or ninety-six
17 thousand one hundred eighty-four, of New Mexico households are
18 headed by a woman, with no husband present; and

19 WHEREAS, among families with a female-headed household,
20 thirty-six and two-tenths percent have income below the federal
21 poverty level; and

22 WHEREAS, fifty-one and seven-tenths percent, or twenty-
23 four thousand two hundred thirty-six, of grandparents who live
24 with their grandchildren in New Mexico are primary caretakers,
25 and the majority of these caretaker grandparents are women; and

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1 WHEREAS, in New Mexico, women on average earn only seventy
2 percent of what men earn; and

3 WHEREAS, for New Mexican women of color, the earnings gap
4 is significantly higher than average: Hispanic women earn just
5 fifty-five percent of what white men earn and American Indian
6 women earn just fifty-three percent of what white men earn; and

7 WHEREAS, the office of the governor's council on women's
8 health has completed significant research on the impact of
9 economic security on the health of women and families;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
11 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the office of
12 the governor's council on women's health or its successor be
13 requested to convene a task force to study policy options
14 related to paid maternity leave; paid time off; part-time
15 employee benefits; policy incentives for family-friendly small
16 businesses; employment-based childcare; and other issues that
17 will improve the health of women and families by addressing
18 economic security; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include
20 representatives from the university of New Mexico's bureau of
21 business and economic research; the women's advocacy community;
22 the workforce solutions department; the economic development
23 department; the department of health; the human services
24 department; the children, youth and families department's at-
25 home infant care program; the chambers of commerce of New

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1 Mexico cities with populations over sixty thousand individuals;
2 the small business community; an asset-building organization;
3 and others that the office of the governor's council on women's
4 health identifies; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the workforce solutions
6 department be requested to update its survey of employee
7 benefits and report its findings to the task force by August
8 2010; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
10 use a five-component health model to develop comprehensive
11 policy recommendations in the following areas:

- 12 A. direct services;
- 13 B. outreach and education;
- 14 C. professional education;
- 15 D. leadership development; and
- 16 E. research; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to
18 report to the interim legislative health and human services
19 committee by November 1, 2010; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
21 transmitted to the governor; the chair and vice chair of the
22 interim legislative health and human services committee; the
23 secretary of workforce solutions; the secretary of economic
24 development; the secretary of health; the secretary of human
25 services; the secretary of children, youth and families; the

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1 executive director of the office of the governor's council on
2 women's health; the director of the university of New Mexico's
3 bureau of business and economic research; and the chairs of two
4 chambers of commerce of New Mexico cities with populations over
5 sixty thousand individuals.

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