

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF CORRECTIONS TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE TASK FORCE APPOINTED TO IMPLEMENT AND DESIGN EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THE FEMALE POPULATION IN THE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, in the past thirty years, the United States has seen an eight hundred percent increase in the incarceration of women and now has the highest incarceration rate for women worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the number of women incarcerated in New Mexico has tripled over the past fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, in July 2010, there were five hundred eighty-eight female prisoners in the state, housed at the New Mexico women's correctional facility in Grants, and eighty-five percent of these women have children, making their needs and concerns different from the needs and concerns of their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, a task force appointed by the secretary of corrections pursuant to several previous house and senate memorials has been examining issues related to female inmates and the increasing incarceration and recidivism rates experienced by women; and

WHEREAS, the issues that this task force identified for study and recommendation require continued examination,

particularly in light of an anticipated budget reduction for the corrections department; and

WHEREAS, because of these budget reductions, the corrections department will need to increase its reliance on community collaborations and partnerships in the provision of basic services and the development of innovative and unique solutions for the female inmate population in order to ensure the readiness of these women to reintegrate into their home communities; and

WHEREAS, such collaborations have been shown to be successful, both in New Mexico and throughout the country, despite limited or reduced government resources; and

WHEREAS, the task force has initiated the implementation of gender classification and reentry tools; worked toward parole violation reduction; reviewed the current controlled release pilot project; sought improvements to reentry procedures and processes; worked toward strengthening the relationship with the interagency behavioral health purchasing collaborative; explored various substance abuse treatments, including medication-assisted therapies; explored alternatives to the use of solitary confinement for women; investigated medicaid enrollment for the children of inmates; and explored a pilot work release program for women, utilizing advanced technology; and

WHEREAS, the work of this task force must continue if

the state is to ensure the health, safety and well-being of women incarcerated in New Mexico, as well as the safety of the general public;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of corrections be requested to continue working with the task force appointed to implement and design effective solutions for the female population in the corrections system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include the warden of the New Mexico women's correctional facility and representatives from corrections corporation of America; correctional medical services; the adult probation and parole division of the corrections department; the children, youth and families department; the public defender department; the New Mexico women's justice project; the New Mexico criminal defense lawyers association; the commission on the status of women; the judiciary; central New Mexico community college; a rape crisis center; the first judicial district attorney's office; community practitioners in behavioral health and substance abuse treatment; former female inmates who have completed their sentences, including any on probation or parole; and other interested and appropriate parties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to continue to pursue the recommendations and solutions already identified and to identify new recommendations and

solutions for females in the corrections system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report on its continued progress as well as any new findings, recommendations and solutions to the appropriate interim legislative committee during the 2011 interim; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the warden of the New Mexico women's correctional facility; corrections corporation of America; correctional medical services; the adult probation and parole division of the corrections department; the children, youth and families department; the public defender department; the New Mexico women's justice project; the New Mexico criminal defense lawyers association; the commission on the status of women; central New Mexico community college; and the first judicial district attorney's office.