

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING SEPTEMBER 8, 2011 "EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION DAY" AT THE NEW MEXICO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, REQUESTING THAT THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SEEK AN INCREASE IN FEDERAL FUNDING AND REQUESTING POLICYMAKERS TO SEEK FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THAT ALL NEW MEXICO CHILDREN GET ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES.

WHEREAS, according to the national scientific council on the developing child, babies' brain development is rapid and the architecture that lays the foundation for future success is shaped before children enter kindergarten; and

WHEREAS, many new parents need skills and support to learn how to foster brain development and provide high-quality interactions as children's first teachers; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States department of education, New Mexico ranks forty-ninth in the United States for the percentage of fourth graders who read proficiently; and

WHEREAS, the Annie E. Casey foundation reports that New Mexico ranks forty-seventh in the United States for the percentage of teens who do not finish high school; and

WHEREAS, according to a recent United States census study, fifty-one percent of New Mexico's children live in low-

income households; and

WHEREAS, poverty is a key risk factor for a child's achievement in school, and educational attainment is a key determinant to a child's future economic security; and

WHEREAS, evaluations by Rutgers university of high-quality early learning programs show that they improve outcomes for children in elementary and secondary schools; and

WHEREAS, prevention is more effective and less costly than remediation; and

WHEREAS, research published in the *Journal of Public Economics* by noted economists shows that investing in early childhood development for disadvantaged children and their families provides a ten percent return on investment each year throughout the child's life through increased personal achievement and social productivity; and

WHEREAS, less than twenty percent of children from birth to age five have access to New Mexico's early childhood programs, including home visiting, high-quality child care and the New Mexico pre-kindergarten program, which helps children to be ready to learn in school; and

WHEREAS, funding for early childhood services accounts for less than one percent of the state's general fund budget and, overall, the amount of federal and state funding available to children and families has been reduced over the last three years; and

WHEREAS, only five percent of families with newborn babies get state-funded services that provide parent coaching or home visiting; and

WHEREAS, the state's most recent pre-kindergarten program evaluation showed measurable gains in literacy and mathematics skills for children who participated in child care assistance programs; and

WHEREAS, only sixteen percent of New Mexico's four-year-olds had access to participate in child care assistance programs during the 2010-2011 school year; and

WHEREAS, funding for child care assistance programs in the state was reduced by twenty-three percent between fiscal years 2011 and 2012; and

WHEREAS, since fiscal year 2010, the state has reduced payments to child care providers and has increased parents' copayments; and

WHEREAS, more than sixty-eight percent of New Mexico families with children rely on child care to work or attend school, and eligibility for child care assistance has been reduced so that six thousand children are on the state's waiting list for child care assistance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that September 8, 2011 be declared "Early Childhood Care and Education Day" at the house of representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New Mexico's congressional delegation be requested to seek increased federal funding for early childhood care and education in the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that policymakers be requested to ensure that all New Mexico children get access to high-quality early childhood care and education programs and services that will provide them with the opportunity to thrive and find success in school and become productive members of their communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that high-quality early childhood care and education programs and services be recognized as critically important to the health, well being and economic vitality of all New Mexico communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the communities and organizations that are currently providing high-quality early childhood care and education be commended; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that state agencies and tribal, county, municipal and other governmental entities be urged to support the improvement of the accessibility and quality of early childhood care and education services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor and to the members of New Mexico's congressional delegation.