

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 27

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE WORK WITH THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY, THE NEW MEXICO BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND OTHERS TO STUDY AND DRAFT A LITERACY LAW FOR NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, the United States once led the world in college graduation rates, but now it ranks only fourteenth out of twenty-two developed countries and, even worse, it has the eighth-lowest high school graduation rate; and

WHEREAS, in a recent literacy study of thirty-one nations, the United States' fifteen-year-olds finished fifteenth in literacy scores; and

WHEREAS, approximately one-third of all fourth grade students in the United States fail to read fluently enough to

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1 comprehend text-level reading, and this gap only worsens as
2 students continue through to upper grades, with the likely
3 result that large numbers of students drop out of school; and

4 WHEREAS, literacy and education are intrinsically linked,
5 and literacy provides the basis for all other accomplishments
6 in education, jobs and careers, hobbies, knowledge attainment,
7 self-esteem, social status and, ultimately, quality of life;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, in stark human terms, the consequences of
10 illiteracy are catastrophic, not just for the individual but
11 for everyone and all communities; and

12 WHEREAS, human beings are not born to read, so there is no
13 biological imperative to read as there is to vocalize; reading
14 is an invention, something that must be taught, which means
15 there must be teachers who know how to teach reading; and

16 WHEREAS, schools are society's key resource for teaching
17 all of its members to read and when schools fail to teach
18 children how to read, the whole of the societal base fails and
19 American democracy's promise to the world and to history
20 falters and fades as another generation is lost to illiteracy
21 and poor education;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
23 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study
24 committee work with the public education department, the office
25 of education accountability, the New Mexico business roundtable

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1 for educational excellence and others to study and draft a
2 literacy law that provides for:

3 A. the teaching of the science of reading and
4 scientifically based reading instruction for students in
5 teacher preparation programs, including best practices for
6 identifying the best method of teaching children who learn to
7 read differently;

8 B. licensure requirements for teachers that include
9 knowledge of scientifically based reading instruction and more
10 stringent requirements for teachers of reading;

11 C. screening and assessment of students' reading
12 abilities; and

13 D. the provision of scientifically based reading
14 instruction for all students and remediation of students who
15 are determined to have dyslexia and other reading difficulties;
16 and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education
18 study committee present a report, to include recommendations
19 for a model literacy law, to the legislature by January 1,
20 2012; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
22 transmitted to the legislative education study committee for
23 further distribution.