

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 21

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES TO
CONVENE A STEERING COMMITTEE TO STUDY AND DEVELOP EQUAL ACCESS
TO SERVICES FOR YOUTH STATEWIDE WITH AN EMPHASIS ON RURAL AND
FRONTIER AREAS OF THE STATE.

WHEREAS, acts of juvenile delinquency are detrimental to
communities and to public safety and costly to the taxpayer;
and

WHEREAS, too many youth are engaging in behaviors that
lead to school difficulties, such as academic failure, truancy
and suspension, and that lead to arrest and referral to the
juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, youth involved in delinquent behaviors who do not
receive effective intervention services are at high risk for
academic failure and increased criminal activity; and

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1 WHEREAS, effective intervention services are not uniformly
2 available throughout the state resulting in inequitable
3 treatment and outcomes for youth and their families; and

4 WHEREAS, there is also a need for substance abuse and
5 mental health services for youth and a need to deliver the
6 appropriate wraparound services from birth to age twenty-five,
7 including home visitation for first-time mothers, teen
8 pregnancy services and other needed services; and

9 WHEREAS, the public policy of the state as expressed in
10 the Children's Code is to provide a continuum of services for
11 children and their families, including prevention, diversion,
12 early intervention and treatment; and

13 WHEREAS, another goal in the Children's Code is to reduce
14 overrepresentation of minority children in the juvenile justice
15 system and in family services and abuse and neglect systems
16 through early intervention, community support services and the
17 elimination of discrimination; and

18 WHEREAS, a clinical diagnosis for youth in the justice
19 system, although well-intended as a means to get treatment
20 services, often becomes a stigma, labeling the youth and
21 disqualifying the youth for military service and job
22 opportunities; and

23 WHEREAS, in order to achieve these goals, equitable and
24 guaranteed access to services in rural and frontier communities
25 must be developed, with consideration given to geography and

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1 transportation issues; and

2 WHEREAS, diversion and early intervention, particularly in
3 the schools, will increase public safety while holding children
4 accountable for their actions; and

5 WHEREAS, there is no national model for providing access
6 to effective services for youth in rural and frontier
7 communities, and New Mexico desires to become such a model; and

8 WHEREAS, New Mexico needs to organize efforts statewide in
9 order to provide juvenile justice system reform, similar to
10 Bernalillo county's, and to provide equitable access to
11 juvenile justice services throughout the state, secure positive
12 outcomes for youth and increase public safety;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
14 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of children, youth and
15 families be requested to convene a steering committee to study
16 how to develop and provide equitable treatment and equal access
17 to services for youth, from prevention to intervention, with an
18 emphasis on the underserved rural areas of the state; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include an
20 examination of whether there is equal access to services
21 statewide and whether youth in the justice system are treated
22 equitably statewide; an examination of youth truancy,
23 suspension from school and referrals to the juvenile justice
24 system and how to develop and implement effective early
25 intervention services; an examination of mental health and

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1 substance abuse services for youth, especially in rural areas;
2 an examination of case processing time for youth in the justice
3 system from arrest to disposition by the court; an examination
4 of the length of time adjudicated youth held in detention must
5 wait for placement in a treatment program or facility; and an
6 examination of the conditions of confinement in juvenile
7 detention centers as well as current efforts to improve
8 training for detention officers; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the steering committee
10 encourage the nineteen existing juvenile justice continuum
11 boards to help in the development and improvement of needed
12 services, and that the steering committee develop and recommend
13 a long-term sustainable plan for juvenile justice system reform
14 and youth services statewide; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the steering committee include
16 representatives from the children, youth and families
17 department, the state legislature, the administrative office of
18 the courts, the New Mexico supreme court, the New Mexico
19 district judges association, the New Mexico attorney general,
20 the public education department, the department of health, the
21 human services department, the department of public safety, the
22 New Mexico association of counties, the juvenile justice
23 advisory committee, urban and rural juvenile justice continuum
24 sites, the interagency behavioral health purchasing
25 collaborative, the behavioral health statewide entity, the

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1 district attorney's association, the public defender
2 department, a local law enforcement agency, a county juvenile
3 detention administrator, a nonprofit organization serving
4 youths and their families, a nonprofit advocacy group
5 interested in youth services and other interested parties as
6 appropriate; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the steering committee report
8 its findings and recommendations, including a strategic plan
9 and outcomes, to the legislative finance committee and other
10 appropriate interim legislative committees by October 2012; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
12 transmitted to the children, youth and families department, the
13 legislative council service, the administrative office of the
14 courts, the New Mexico supreme court, the New Mexico attorney
15 general, the public education department, the department of
16 health, the human services department, the department of public
17 safety, the New Mexico association of counties, the juvenile
18 justice advisory committee, the interagency behavioral health
19 purchasing collaborative, the behavioral health statewide
20 entity, the district attorney's association and the public
21 defender department.