

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING PUBLIC SCHOOL FOOD DIRECTORS TO DONATE EXCESS SCHOOL MEALS; REQUESTING STATE AGENCIES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO ADDRESS FOOD REDISTRIBUTION TO HUNGRY AND HOMELESS PEOPLE IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has an ongoing hunger crisis, in both its rural and urban communities; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2010 Missing Meals in New Mexico study, over one-half of the meals of New Mexico's poorest residents come from sources outside of family income, such as government assistance programs or nonprofit meal providers, and the meals for thirteen percent of New Mexico's poorest residents are missing, which is "the equivalent of each hungry person in New Mexico missing twelve meals every single month"; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico association of food banks compiled these grim statistics: every week, nearly forty thousand New Mexicans seek food assistance; forty percent of the members of households seeking food assistance are children under the age of eighteen; seven percent of those children are under the age of five; thirteen percent of the people seeking food assistance in New Mexico are senior citizens; forty-one percent of households needing food assistance report having at least one member in poor health; seventy percent of food

pantry programs in New Mexico rely entirely on volunteers; seventy-five percent of the food pantries surveyed reported an increase in the number of people needing assistance; twenty percent of current food pantries in New Mexico were not in existence two years ago; the average monthly income for a household seeking food assistance is nine hundred dollars (\$900) a month; and eighty-three percent of the food distributed by food pantries in New Mexico is provided by food banks; and

WHEREAS, as recently reported in the *Albuquerque Journal*, Feeding America, the hunger relief charity, states that New Mexico's children are the hungriest in the nation, with thirty and six-tenths percent having "uncertain access to adequate food"; that New Mexico has the highest percentage of children in public school qualifying, based on family income, for free and reduced-price lunch; and that twenty percent of New Mexicans are considered "food insecure", the second-highest rate in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the Annie E. Casey foundation this year ranked New Mexico as the worst state for child well-being; and

WHEREAS, the root issues of hunger in New Mexico are attributed to a high poverty rate and the fact that thirty-two of thirty-three counties qualify as "rural" by federal standards; and

WHEREAS, food costs more in rural areas than in urban

areas, and there are fewer food stores in rural areas than urban areas; and

WHEREAS, a recent food study indicated that the average travel time to the most frequented grocery stores in New Mexico was twenty-nine minutes and that there is only one food store for every four hundred eighty-six square miles in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the Food Donors Liability Act protects food donors acting in good faith from any civil liability or criminal penalty regarding the condition of the donated food, and Public Law 110-247, the Federal Food Donation Act of 2008, encourages executive agencies and contractors of executive agencies to donate excess, apparently wholesome food to nonprofit organizations to feed food-insecure people in the United States; and

WHEREAS, an executive agency making donations pursuant to the Federal Food Donation Act of 2008 is exempt from civil and criminal liability to the extent provided under the federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act; and

WHEREAS, there are nonprofit organizations in New Mexico that engage in "food rescue programs" to salvage food from restaurants, repackage it and give it to nursing homes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department be requested to inform all school

district and charter school food services directors that they are encouraged to donate excess school meals to public or nonprofit organizations that feed the hungry and the homeless; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a work group consisting of representatives of the aging and long-term services department; human services department; department of environment; public education department; higher education department; children, youth and families department; and nonprofit organizations that work on issues concerning hunger convene during the 2014 interim to develop a plan for maximizing food redistribution for both public and private entities to hungry and homeless people in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretaries of public education and aging and long-term services for appropriate distribution.