SENATE RESOLUTION 2

51st legislature - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - second session, 2014

INTRODUCED BY

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A RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE SENATE'S LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF THE SECRETARY OF HUMAN SERVICES TO FAIRLY AND FAITHFULLY EXECUTE THE DUTIES OF THAT OFFICE.

WHEREAS, the governor in January 2011 nominated Sidonie Squier to serve as the secretary of human services subject to the consent of the senate; and

WHEREAS, the senate confirmed the nomination on March 2, 2011; and

WHEREAS, since that time, Secretary Squier's stewardship of the programs that assist New Mexico's most vulnerable residents has been marred by her decision to halt funding to behavioral health care providers serving the vast majority of New Mexicans who receive behavioral health services through medicaid; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Squier's decision to halt the funding was based on unproven allegations of fraud that she has refused to reveal to the accused, the legislature and the public; and

WHEREAS, the management consulting firm hired by Secretary Squier to review the billing, accounting and services provided by the behavioral health care providers reported to Secretary Squier that it found no credible allegations of fraud; and

WHEREAS, that conclusion was deleted from the report before it was delivered by Secretary Squier's administration to the state auditor; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Squier's refusal to restore funding pending the outcome of a thorough and complete investigation has effectively dismantled the state's already fragile behavioral health care system and threatened the well-being of New Mexicans; and

WHEREAS, the attorney general's office, which is conducting the investigation, has already announced that there was no evidence to support allegations of fraud in the case of one behavioral health care provider whose funding was suspended; and

WHEREAS, the secretary, whose responsibilities also include service on the state's hunger task force and administration of the supplemental nutrition assistance program, expressed her view that there is not now and never has been a problem with hunger in New Mexico; and

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WHEREAS, the secretary's denial of the well-documented hunger and food insecurity that plagues a substantial number of New Mexicans, especially children, makes her unsuitable to administer food assistance programs; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Squier's lack of sensitivity to and awareness of the gravity and import of her actions and words are not befitting a cabinet secretary charged with overseeing and administering the state's human services programs; and

WHEREAS, the senate has lost confidence in the secretary of human services' ability to lead the department and administer the programs critical to the health and well-being of New Mexicans;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it has no confidence in Secretary of Human Services Sidonie Squier's ability to continue to serve the residents of New Mexico.

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