

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE STATE BAR OF NEW MEXICO, THE NEW MEXICO LEGAL
3 AID VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY PROGRAM AND THE SOUTHWEST WOMEN'S LAW
4 CENTER TO FORM A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY HOW TO ENCOURAGE MORE
5 LICENSED ATTORNEYS IN NEW MEXICO TO INCREASE PRO BONO
6 SERVICES FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES.

7
8 WHEREAS, each year, legal service providers are unable
9 to provide legal assistance for many low-income individuals
10 because of a lack of funding and a lack of personnel to
11 provide the services; and

12 WHEREAS, the New Mexico supreme court's commission on
13 access to justice has reported that less than twenty percent
14 of the legal needs of low-income New Mexicans are being met;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, the consequences of not resolving civil legal
17 problems such as access to housing; education; health care;
18 food assistance; fair pay; support for victims of domestic
19 violence; and child support can be devastating for families;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, consumer scams and unfair labor practices that
22 prey on needy, vulnerable populations also take a toll on
23 low-income families; and

24 WHEREAS, a low-income family that does not have access
25 to legal assistance when such assistance is needed can suffer

1 devastating effects, including draining the family's budget,
2 driving the family deeper into poverty and even causing the
3 family to become homeless; and

4 WHEREAS, there are more than five thousand five hundred
5 licensed attorneys in New Mexico who could provide some pro
6 bono services for low-income families;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
8 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a pro bono
9 working group composed of attorneys in private practice,
10 governmental practice and nonprofit practice be requested to
11 form; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the pro bono working group
13 be requested to establish a plan, collect data and analyze
14 information for making recommendations on how to encourage
15 more licensed attorneys in New Mexico to increase pro bono
16 services for low-income families; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the executive director of
18 the southwest women's law center be requested to serve as the
19 chair of the pro bono working group and to convene the
20 working group; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the pro bono working group
22 be requested to work with the state bar of New Mexico to
23 publish and disseminate its findings and recommendations to
24 the licensed members of the New Mexico state bar; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the pro bono working group

1 be requested to present its findings and recommendations to
2 the appropriate interim legislative committee before December
3 31, 2018; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
5 transmitted to the governor; the chief justice of the supreme
6 court; the executive director of the New Mexico bar
7 association; and representatives of the New Mexico legal aid
8 volunteer attorney program, the New Mexico Black lawyers
9 association, the New Mexico Hispanic bar association, the New
10 Mexico lesbian and gay lawyers association, the New Mexico
11 women's bar association, the Indian law section of the state
12 bar of New Mexico and the bar associations in each of the
13 thirty-three counties in New Mexico.