A JOINT MEMORIAL
REQUESTING THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT, THE
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO
STUDY THE INCIDENCE, NATURE AND EFFECTS OF BULLYING AND OTHER
FORMS OF HARASSMENT AFFECTING NEW MEXICO CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

WHEREAS, bullying is defined as an intentional and
generally unprovoked attempt by one or more persons to inflict
physical pain or psychological distress on one or more victims,
and it requires an imbalance of physical or psychological
power, with a bully being or being perceived to be the
stronger; and

WHEREAS, bullying may be direct, with face-to-face
physical or verbal confrontation, or indirect, with less
visible action, such as the spreading of rumors or social
exclusion; and

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WHEREAS, though a single attack on a victim, if severe enough, can be accurately described as bullying, the term more often refers to a series of negative actions that occur frequently; and

WHEREAS, the definition of bullying includes repeated and pervasive written, verbal or cyber expressions, physical acts or gestures or a pattern of these elements, which are intended to cause distress in one or more children or youth in a community setting; and

WHEREAS, the definition of bullying also includes hazing, harassment, teasing, social exclusion, threat, stalking, theft, physical violence, public humiliation, destruction of property, intimidation or menacing acts committed against a student, which may be based on the student's perceived or actual race, color, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, physical appearance, social class, age, sexual orientation or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2007 New Mexico youth risk and resiliency survey, nine percent of New Mexico high school students reported skipping school within the past thirty days because they felt unsafe at school or while traveling to or from school. In 2009, in order to better define the problem of bullying, the New Mexico youth risk and resiliency survey will collect data that is specific to school bullying; and

WHEREAS, American medical association research findings
indicate that bullying has a negative social and public health impact on children and youth; and

WHEREAS, a bully may exhibit antisocial or delinquent behaviors, such as vandalism, shoplifting, truancy and frequent drug use, that continue into young adulthood; a bully is more apt to drink, smoke and perform poorly in school; and one in four boys who has been a bully has a criminal record by age thirty; and

WHEREAS, a bullied person may experience short-term problems, such as depression and thoughts of suicide, anxiety, loneliness and difficulties with school work, and long-term problems, including low self-esteem and depression; and

WHEREAS, in a United States department of education study, younger students were found to be more likely than older students to report being bullied; and

WHEREAS, in a United States department of education study, fourteen percent of students reported being the victims of bullying; and

WHEREAS, in a United States department of education study, of those students who reported lower grades, the victims of bullying were more likely to report receiving low grades than their non-bullied counterparts; and

WHEREAS, victims of, and witnesses to, bullying often do not inform adults because of intimidation by the bullies; and

WHEREAS, bullying behavior is identified as a problem that
creates a climate of fear and intimidation and that affects
children and youth in multiple environments within the
community, including youth clubs, sports and public and private
educational settings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the children, youth and families
department, the public education department and the department
of health be requested to conduct a joint study to determine
the current status of bullying prevention efforts in the state;

to research evidence-based strategies to prevent bullying; to
collect, analyze and report data related to the impact of
bullying on juvenile justice, education and health; and to make
recommendations on the best approach to ensuring effective
bullying prevention programs statewide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretaries of health,
public education and children, youth and families report their
findings to an appropriate interim legislative committee and to
the legislative education study committee by November 30, 2009;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
transmitted to the chair of the appropriate interim legislative
committee, the director of the legislative education study
committee and the secretaries of health, public education and
children, youth and families.

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