The Legislature
of the
State of New Mexico

50th Legislature, 2nd Session

LAWS 2012

CHAPTER

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 21

Introduced by

REPRESENTATIVE RHONDA S. KING AND REPRESENTATIVE DON L. TRIPP
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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, in order to achieve these goals, equitable and
guaranteed access to services in rural and frontier
communities must be developed, with consideration given to
geography and transportation issues; and

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

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include an
examination of whether there is equal access to services
statewide and whether youth in the justice system are treated
equitably statewide; an examination of youth truancy,
suspension from school and referrals to the juvenile justice
system and how to develop and implement effective early
intervention services; an examination of mental health and
substance abuse services for youth, especially in rural areas;
an examination of case processing time for youth in the
justice system from arrest to disposition by the court; an
examination of the length of time adjudicated youth held in
detention must wait for placement in a treatment program or
facility; and an examination of the conditions of confinement.
in juvenile detention centers as well as current efforts to
improve training for detention officers; and

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the steering committee
include representatives from the children, youth and families
department, the state legislature, the administrative office
of the courts, the New Mexico supreme court, the New Mexico
district judges association, the New Mexico attorney general,
the public education department, the department of health, the
human services department, the department of public safety,
the New Mexico association of counties, the juvenile justice
advisory committee, urban and rural juvenile justice continuum
sites, the interagency behavioral health purchasing
collaborative, the behavioral health statewide entity, the
district attorney's association, the public defender
department, a local law enforcement agency, a county juvenile
detention administrator, a nonprofit organization serving
youths and their families, a nonprofit advocacy group
interested in youth services and other interested parties as
appropriate; and

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the children, youth and families department, the legislative council service, the administrative office of the courts, the New Mexico supreme court, the New Mexico attorney general, the public education department, the department of health, the human services department, the department of public safety, the New Mexico association of counties, the juvenile justice advisory committee, the interagency behavioral health purchasing collaborative, the behavioral health statewide entity, the district attorney's association and the public defender department.
S/ BEN LUJAN
BEN LUJAN, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

S/ STEPHEN R. ARIAS
STEPHEN R. ARIAS, CHIEF CLERK
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

S/ JOHN A. SANCHEZ
JOHN A. SANCHEZ, PRESIDENT
SENATE

S/ LENORE M. NARANJO
LENORE M. NARANJO, CHIEF CLERK
SENATE