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SENATE MEMORIAL 1

**53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017**

INTRODUCED BY

Bill B. O'Neill

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF INFORMAL OR FAMILY  
CAREGIVERS AND SUPPORTING MEASURES TO PROVIDE THEM WITH  
MEANINGFUL FINANCIAL RELIEF.

WHEREAS, as of 2015, approximately twelve percent of New  
Mexico's population under the age of sixty-five and more than  
forty percent of its population aged sixty-five or older are  
persons with a disability; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States census bureau, New  
Mexico's population of persons over seventy-nine years old will  
increase more than eighty percent in the next fifteen years;  
and

WHEREAS, an "informal or family caregiver" is "an unpaid  
family member, friend or neighbor who provides care to a person  
with an acute or chronic condition and who needs assistance to

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1 manage a variety of tasks", from bathing and dressing "to tube  
2 feeding and ventilator care"; and

3 WHEREAS, informal or family caregivers "remain the  
4 backbone of our nation's long-term care system"; and

5 WHEREAS, informal or family caregivers take on many roles  
6 in addition to caring for the basic emotional and physical  
7 needs of a loved one, including medication management,  
8 providing transportation to medical appointments, providing  
9 care following discharge from a hospital or rehabilitation  
10 facility and serving as overall health care coordinators; and

11 WHEREAS, according to the Pew research center, in 2015,  
12 there were forty million four hundred thousand unpaid informal  
13 or family caregivers for persons over the age of sixty-five in  
14 the nation, with nine out of ten caring for an aging relative  
15 who is in most cases a parent; and

16 WHEREAS, most informal or family caregivers are between  
17 forty-five and sixty-four years old; and

18 WHEREAS, twenty-seven percent of these caregivers provide  
19 help to two or more adults over the age of sixty-five, with one  
20 in five providing care on a daily basis; and

21 WHEREAS, six in ten informal or family caregivers are  
22 employed, with one-half working full time; and

23 WHEREAS, when a family caregiver over the age of fifty is  
24 forced to leave the workforce to care for a parent, "the  
25 economic toll is stunning", with the caregiver losing on

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1 average over three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in wages  
2 and social security and pension benefits over a lifetime; and

3 WHEREAS, the financial toll on a woman who assumes the  
4 role of caretaker in midlife exceeds on average three hundred  
5 twenty-five thousand dollars (\$325,000) and may "substantially  
6 increase" her risk of "living in poverty and receiving public  
7 assistance" when she herself is aged; and

8 WHEREAS, New Mexico informal or family caregivers  
9 participating in a 2015 AARP survey expressed frustration that,  
10 while they earn too much to qualify for medicaid benefits, they  
11 did not earn enough to support the needs of their loved ones;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, sixty percent of those surveyed reported having  
14 used their own funds to provide care, with thirty-four percent  
15 reporting that they were financially strained due to their  
16 caregiving responsibilities; and

17 WHEREAS, nationwide, out-of-pocket costs for caregivers of  
18 persons over fifty years old averaged five thousand five  
19 hundred thirty-one dollars (\$5,531) in 2007; and

20 WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico state plan for family  
21 caregivers, each year, four hundred nineteen thousand informal  
22 or family caregivers in New Mexico provide two hundred seventy-  
23 four million hours of unpaid services, with one out of five  
24 Hispanics serving as a family caregiver and ninety percent of  
25 long-term care in Indian country provided by family members;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, seventy-one percent of New Mexico family  
3 caregivers report being responsible for medical or nursing  
4 tasks, and seventy-four percent report being responsible for  
5 medication management; and

6 WHEREAS, the New Mexico state plan for family caregivers  
7 estimates the total economic value of care provided by informal  
8 or family caregivers in New Mexico at three billion one hundred  
9 million dollars (\$3,100,000,000) annually; and

10 WHEREAS, the economic value of this care does not take  
11 into account cost savings attributable to informal or family  
12 caregiving: over two thousand dollars (\$2,000) per day for  
13 hospital inpatient care in New Mexico; two hundred fourteen  
14 dollars (\$214) per day for nursing home care in New Mexico; and  
15 three thousand three hundred thirty-three dollars (\$3,333) per  
16 month for assisted living in New Mexico; and

17 WHEREAS, as of 2015, the average cost for home health care  
18 in New Mexico was twenty-one dollars (\$21.00) per hour, and the  
19 median hourly wage of a home health aide or personal care  
20 attendant was less than ten dollars (\$10.00) per hour;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
22 OF NEW MEXICO that, as recommended by the AARP public policy  
23 institute, meaningful financial assistance for informal and  
24 family caregivers through state or federal tax credits or other  
25 mechanisms be provided to ease the financial costs of

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1 caregiving and improve their financial security; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, as recommended by the AARP  
3 public policy institute, reforms such as social security  
4 caregiver credits for time spent out of the workforce for  
5 family caregiving be enacted; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, as recommended by the AARP  
7 public policy institute, the state seek to expand publicly  
8 funded home- and community-based services programs that allow  
9 payment to informal or family caregivers of consumers in its  
10 renewal of the state's medicaid waiver; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department  
12 be requested to require in its contracts with medicaid managed  
13 care organizations that informal or family caregivers be  
14 reimbursed for care coordination activities; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
16 transmitted to each member of New Mexico's congressional  
17 delegation; each member of the New Mexico legislature; the  
18 tribal leadership of every Indian nation, tribe and pueblo  
19 located wholly or in part in New Mexico; the secretary of  
20 health; the secretary of human services; the secretary of aging  
21 and long-term services; and every member and participant of the  
22 New Mexico family caregiver task force convened by the aging  
23 and long-term services department in 2014 pursuant to House  
24 Joint Memorial 4.