



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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*****Media Advisory*****

New Mexico Governor Signs Legislation to Improve High School Graduation Rates of Pregnant and Parenting Students

Santa Fe, NM – Governor Susana Martinez has signed HB 300, establishing policies that provide excused absences for pregnant and parenting students. This legislation sets a statewide standard that includes a ten day excused absence for the documented birth of a child, and four excused absences, per semester, when pregnancy or caring for a child necessitates missing class. Responsible young parents who use this policy will be required to document all absences and complete makeup work in a timely manner.

“As an educator and administrator, I have often seen young parents pressed to choose between being either a good parent or being a good student,” said Sally Kosnick, Executive Director of NM GRADS. “New Mexico needs an absence policy that allows young parents to balance their responsibilities. This bill accomplishes that.”

“As a young parent, I faced judgment from schools, programs and society, which only isolated me, as a new mom. I’m grateful and proud of New Mexico’s bipartisan commitment to move from shaming young parents toward supporting families and students to thrive.” Adriann Barboa, Field Director, Strong Families NM.

“New Mexico is working through many strategies so that young people can make real decisions about their bodies and lives. Young parents identified excused absences as a policy change that will have a real impact on the lives of their families,” said Micaela Cadena, Policy Director, Young Women United. “From both sides of the aisle, our elected officials have come together to put New Mexico’s families first.”

Executive Director of the Southwest Women’s Law Center, Pamela Herndon, states, “This is a momentous occasion for celebrating Title IX in the state of New Mexico, particularly for pregnant and parenting students. Our state now recognizes that a young woman’s decision to have a child will not interfere with her right to a good education.”

“Students have a fundamental right to equality in education,” said ACLU-NM Executive Director Peter Simonson. “This means we cannot continue to push promising students out of our schools simply because they become parents. Reforming our absence policies will help students

caring for new families finish their education and continue to be valued, contributing members of our communities.”

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