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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Landmark Investment in New Mexico's Children Passes Senate

The Journey to Provide Funding from State's Land Grant Permanent Fund Now Goes to the Voters

Santa Fe, N.M. – Today, support for New Mexico's early childhood education and K-12 programs passed on the Senate Floor.

Sponsored by Senator Pete Campos (D-Las Vegas) in the Senate and Rep. Antonio "Moe" Maestas (D-Albuquerque), Rep. Javier Martínez (D-Albuquerque), Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson (D-Albuquerque), Rep. Georgene Louis (D-Albuquerque) in the House, House Joint Resolution 1: Permanent Fund for Early Childhood Education is primed to transform and expand early childhood education programs and provide additional support for K-12 across the state through a 1.25% funding distribution from New Mexico's Land Grant Permanent Fund, currently valued at nearly \$22 billion.

An amendment introduced by Senator Jacob Candelaria (D-Albuquerque) and passed in the Senate Finance Committee raised the annual distribution from the originally proposed 1% to 1.25% of the Land Grant Permanent Fund. As introduced, HJR 1 directed all of the funding to early childhood educational programs. Now, with an increased distribution from the fund, .5% of the funding will go to K-12 education, and .75% to early childhood education programming.

"This bill is about what every child deserves, and that is the best that we can give them so that as they move forward they have a vision and they have purpose, ensuring that their families have a bright future. What that means for all of us is sustainability, more employment, more opportunities, and the ability to use our great minds for innovation," said Senator Pete Campos (D-Las Vegas), Senate sponsor of the bill.

“When we invest in the first three years of life we invest in generations to come,” said newly elected Senator Siah Correa Hemphill (D-Silver City).

“It’s the right time. We have the governance. We have the consistency. We have the supports we need. This will move New Mexico forward,” said Senator Michael Padilla (D-Albuquerque). Padilla spearheaded the creation of the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care during the 2019 legislative session.

House Joint Resolution 1 will next appear on the ballot as a Constitutional Amendment for the voters to decide its fate.

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