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## **Vital Child Support Legislation Unanimously Passes the Senate**

SANTA FE – Today, the New Mexico State Senate unanimously passed important legislation to align the state’s child support laws with federal regulations and national best practices. Senate Bill 140, sponsored by Senator Gay Kernan (District 42-Chaves, Eddy, and Lea), is needed in order for the state to continue to receive \$147.5 million in federal matching funds for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant and the child support program.

“New Mexico is currently at risk of losing millions in federal matching funds,” said Senator Kernan. “This bill not only secures those federal dollars, but it also aligns our child support statutes with best practices from top-performing states across the country.”

Among the best practices in the bill is a revision of the retroactive arrears timeframe, also known as the “lookback period,” from twelve years to three years. This timeframe is commonly used in top-performing states and results in higher child support collections. By adopting this three year “lookback period,” the Human Services Department claims the non-custodial parent will generally have more consistent contact with their child.

“Using these best practices, it is estimated that we will collect an additional \$30.9 million for New Mexico children,” added Senator Kernan. “Though the amounts for higher-income, non-custodial parents are increased, the amounts for those at the lowest income threshold will be more affordable, which should increase voluntary compliance.”

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