



State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

April 9, 2025

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 16

The Honorable Javier Martínez, Speaker of the House and
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Honorable Speaker Martínez and Members of the House:

Pursuant to my authority under Article IV, Section 22 of the New Mexico Constitution, I have signed HOUSE BILL 532 ("HB 532"), enacted by the Fifty-Seventh Legislature, First Session, 2025.

I support HB 532, which requires school boards to adopt guidance for parents promoting water safety. As noted in the analysis of this bill, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional deaths among children ages 5 to 14, and New Mexico ranks in the top 15 states for drowning deaths.

There are two things that strike me about this bill, however. First, while I appreciate the idea that water safety guidance for parents is an admirable and important endeavor, I cannot help but note that firearms remain the leading cause of death for children and teens.¹ If the Legislature can make school districts give parents information about how to protect their children from drowning, surely they should also be willing to make meaningful changes to our gun laws.

Second, HB 532 demonstrates the obvious point that the Legislature has both the authority and the will to require school districts to undertake specific activities. And yet, the Legislature refuses to require even the most basic academic requirements like teaching the science of reading under the auspices of promoting "local control." To add to that irony, the House Education Committee never misses an opportunity to mention that the *Martinez/Yazzie* litigation against the State of New Mexico and not local school districts, but it is the districts that refuse to teach anything but the

¹ See, e.g., *New Report Highlights U.S. 2022 Gun-Related Deaths: Firearms Remain Leading Cause of Death for Children and Teens, and Disproportionately Affect People of Color*, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg Sch. of Pub. H. (Sept. 12, 2024), <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2024/guns-remain-leading-cause-of-death-for-children-and-teens>.

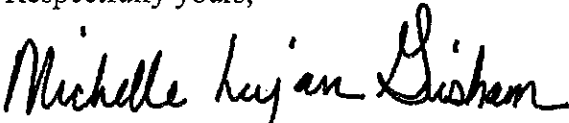
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bare minimum of required evidence-based curricula, provide substandard special education, and even go so far as refuse to provide their students with healthy meals.

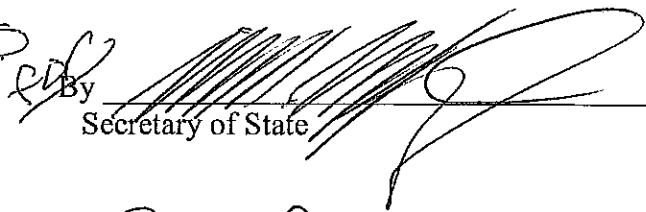
The Legislature can certainly require more from our school districts. Mandating that they adopt water safety guidelines for parents is a fine start, but I believe that actually holding these districts accountable for how they spend their money, what they teach, and who they teach, is more important.

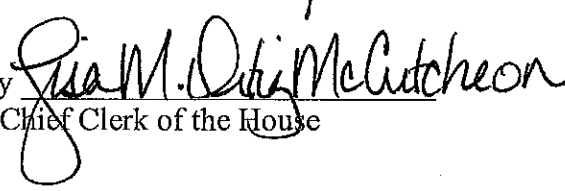
Finally, I offer the resources of the Department of Health to assist in drafting these guidelines or any help in any other way to accomplish this important work.

Respectfully yours,


Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Time: 6:05 a.m. p.m.
Date: 4/9 2025 By 
Secretary of State

Time: 8:12 a.m. p.m.
Date: April 10, 2025 By 
Chief Clerk of the House