



**NEW MEXICO
BUSINESS COALITION**

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RE: Support SB 191 Bridges Across NM Program

Mr./Madame Chair and Committee Members:

The New Mexico Business Coalition (NMBC) represents hundreds of businesses and thousands of New Mexicans. Our focus is to make New Mexico a better place to do business so that New Mexicans have jobs and can provide for their families.

NMBC supports SB 191 New Mexico Behavioral Health Consortium because it would be a first organized step towards addressing homelessness, addiction and mental illness for the state in a holistic manner. New Mexico faces a growing epidemic of substance abuse, behavioral health issues, and unhoused persons. The CDC has ranked New Mexico as highest in the nation for alcohol-related deaths. HUD shows our state to have the fastest growing homelessness rate in the U.S.

Due to a tumultuous year of business and school closures, coupled with the stress of day to day life during the pandemic, these issues facing New Mexicans and our children are sure to be exacerbated.

NMBC believes that this bill is the first step in identifying and addressing many of the deficiencies in New Mexico's mental and behavioral health system leading to our very high homelessness rate.

We respectfully urge you to support SB 191 and thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla J. Sonntag".

Carla J. Sonntag
President