

1. Your name and district number:

Michael Padilla, State Senate District 14

2. The overall goals of welfare reform are to move people from welfare to work, reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy and encourage healthy marriages and family formation. TANF allows funds to be spent for marriage and couple relationship education, responsible fatherhood programs, financial education, and parenting programs. What benefits do you see for allocating 1-2% of the TANF budget in New Mexico for services to strengthen families?

Allocating 1-2% of TANF funds to strengthen families will help develop children at an early age. If families are stronger, the exponential gain in preparation for school at an early age will be significant, helping children to be better prepared for school, assist in keeping kids in school, and help New Mexico kids go on to college at a greater rate, thereby helping them to have more successful lives. Other benefits could be reduced crime, drug use, DWI, etc.

3. Research has consistently shown that the social, educational, health and economic outcomes of children in healthy, two-parent families are better than those living in single-parent households. New Mexico has among the highest rates in the nation for teen pregnancies, school drop-outs, juvenile crimes and women and children living in poverty. New Mexico spends \$225 million every year dealing with the outcomes of families in crisis. If you are elected, what would you do to strengthen families?

I fully support early childhood education programs to help first time mothers, and plan to make this a priority for my time in the legislature. I also intend to propose tougher domestic violence laws, tougher DWI laws, and improved methods for single parent homes to collect child support from the non-custodial parent. I also intend to focus on economic development for my district, to bring in new jobs, that are also good jobs consisting of career growth opportunities, living wages, and employee benefits.

4. The percentage of children in poverty in New Mexico is 26% higher than the national average. There are many factors contributing to this phenomenon including the fact that 45% of infants in New Mexico are born to teen parents. If you are elected, how would you reduce the number of

teen pregnancies in New Mexico?

A proven and significant way to reduce teen pregnancy is to provide young people with a quality education, options to fill their time in activities they enjoy doing, and sex education that also discusses consequences, responsibilities, and future challenges when making the decision to have sex at an early age.

5. Studies show that couple relationship education (e.g., conflict resolution, communication skills, understanding of gender differences, etc.) results in happier and healthier marriages. What programs and services are available to couples and families in your district?

I am a member of the board of directors for Youth Development Incorporated, which operates multiple programs for fathers, mothers, and teens. We also have a services through the South Valley Health Commons, and multiple churches offer various couples/relationship enrichment and counseling services.

6. How can the NM Coalition for Healthy Families help you strengthen families in New Mexico?

The number one way will be to continue your efforts educating the public of the services available to the community at large. Legislators need to know a lot about a lot issues, education of legislators to ensure that they are fully aware of community impacts when action is not taken will be crucial.

7. Do you have any additional ideas or comments regarding New Mexico's families?

I am proponent of the effort to enact a constitutional amendment that dedicates a portion of the permanent fund to early childhood education. I will be working on this issue aggressively in the upcoming legislature and would appreciate any help the coalition can provide.