

**1. Your name and district number:**

William Soules, NM Senate, Dist 37

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**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?**

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Healthy Families are at the core of good outcomes for children.

**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?**

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Many parents have never had any education on how to parent or maintain healthy relationships. I would support legislation that shows positive outcomes for children and families.

**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?**

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Accurate and timely information about all forms of birth control and healthy relationships has been shown to reduce teen pregnancy. Programs like Adolescent Family Life Program in Las Cruces that works with pregnant and parenting teens has been shown to reduce the number of second births to teen mothers and improve birth weight of babies. It also has a teen father component. Successful programs need to be replicated in other communities.

**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?**

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Services tend to be minimal and scattered. Some programs that might be available are not well known and there is a stigma about getting help.

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

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Increased information, knowledge about resources, and access.

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

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**No Response**