Heinrich introduces legislation to level the playing field for New Mexico's children

Written by By Sen. Martin Heinrich
Friday, 15 March 2024 00:00

Act would improve students' literacy

WASHINGTON D.C. — U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich, D-N.M, introduced the Literacy Improvement for Transformation Act, legislation that aims to improve literacy outcomes for all students by ensuring that every K-12 public school has at least one full-time reading or literacy specialist on staff, on March 12.

More than 8 million low-income K-5 students in America are not proficient in reading. According to data provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, children who struggle to read proficiently by fourth grade are four times more likely not to graduate from high school than their peers with grade-level reading skills.

"Every child in New Mexico and across the country deserves an equal shot at success. That begins by making sure every student is able to read and write at their grade level or higher," Heinrich said. "By ensuring every school is staffed with at least one full-time reading or literacy specialist, my Literacy Improvement for Transformation Act will level the playing field to ensure every student has the opportunity to thrive."

Students in underserved communities or those with learning disabilities often face additional challenges when it comes to reading. By hiring more reading and literacy specialists, school districts can help bridge the literacy gap and provide targeted support to students who may be at a higher risk of falling behind their peers.

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The LIFT Act will empower local entities with the resources to address literacy outcomes and gaps and play a larger role in narrowing the educational achievement gap by improving literacy education.The bill establishes a LIFT Grant Program that will provide entities – including local and state educational agencies, non-profit partners, and Bureau of Indian Education schools – with federal support to hire full-time reading or literacy specialists.

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