State of New Mexico
New Mexico Senate

For Immediate Release: Contact: Gerald Gonzalez 505-490-1357
Date: August 24, 2009

Senator Keller Named to Higher
Education Position by Western Interstate
Commission for Higher Education

Santa Fe, NM – Senator Timothy M. Keller (D-Four Corners) has been
named a member of the Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) for the Western
Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Senator Keller was
chosen from among New Mexico legislators by New Mexico’s WICHE
Commissioners, and he will serve and LAC for a 3-year term. WICHE’s New
Mexico Commissioners are Senator Dede Felman, Patricia Anaya Sullivan, Assistant
Dean of New Mexico State University’s College of Engineering and Peter White,
Secretary of Higher Education.

WICHE is a regional organization created under the Western Regional Education
Compact which was adopted in the 1950’s by an array of Western states. In addition to
New Mexico, the member states are Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii,
WICHE was created to facilitate resource sharing among higher education systems of the
Western states. It began operating in Eugene, Oregon, in 1953, then moved to its present
location in Boulder, Colorado in 1955. WICHE is governed by Commissioners from
each state who are appointed by the state’s governor.

WICHE’s Legislative Advisory Committee was created in 1995 by WICHE
to advise its membership on legislative initiatives that affect higher education.
Responding to his appointment, Senator Keller said, “I am intensely interested in
higher education in our State. Education was one of the specific issues that drew
me to the Senate. I see serving on the LAC as a way I can work to expand the
higher education building blocks of our educational system. Because of the
current fiscal situation, we must find improved ways to strengthen higher
education – which is a major point of entry into our workforce, especially in areas
where professional, scientific and technological skills are required. The stronger
our educational system, the stronger that workforce will be and the better our state
will be positioned to build a sound base for a healthy economy.”

Among the 30 bills introduced by Senator Keller during the 49th legislative
session, 6 were focused on educational issues. Among the 8 which Senator Keller
succeeding in getting passed, one of the 4 signed into law by Governor Richardson
was a community school initiative.

###