

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**September 6, 2023
Salon Ortega Ballroom
National Hispanic Cultural Center
1701 4th Street SW
Albuquerque**

The third meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative Harry Garcia, chair, on September 6, 2023 at 9:22 a.m. at the Salon Ortega Ballroom of the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) in Albuquerque.

Present

Rep. Harry Garcia, Chair
Sen. Harold Pope, Vice Chair
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana*
Rep. Luis M. Terrazas

Absent

Rep. Art De La Cruz
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez

Advisory Members

Rep. Stefani Lord
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Rep. Harlan Vincent

Rep. John Block
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Meredith A. Dixon
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Sen. Michael Padilla
Rep. Andrea Reeb

Guest Legislator

Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto

*Appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives as a voting member for this meeting only.

Staff

Jeret Fleetwood, Project Coordinator, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Nancy Martinez, Researcher, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

References to Webcast

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for the agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Wednesday, September 6

Welcome and Introductions (9:22 a.m.)

Representative Garcia introduced John Martinez, chief executive officer and president, NHCC. Mr. Martinez gave welcoming remarks to the members. Representative Garcia allowed Senator Pope to conduct the meeting for the day. Members of the committee introduced themselves.

D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families New Mexico Landscape (9:28 a.m.)

Vincent DelSignore, director, Community Services, D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, said that the institute's mission is to position transitioning service members and their families to thrive in post-service life. In 2022, the legislature allocated funds through Central New Mexico Community College to the institute to conduct a current assessment of New Mexico's veterans services landscape. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20090623%20Item%201%20D'Aniello%20Institute%20for%20Veterans%20and%20Military%20Families%20in%20New%20Mexico%20Landscape%20Assessment.pdf>.

Water and Energy Security (10:17 a.m.)

Alex Cornell du Houx, president, Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA), said that the EOPA is a network of current and former bipartisan elected officials who care about protecting the planet and democracy while working collaboratively to transition the country into a clean energy economy. Mr. Cornell du Houx said that the EOPA works to implement solutions that will help solve the climate crisis and ensure environmental justice.

Veteran Heroes of the American Southwest Media Project (11:26 a.m.)

David C'de Baca introduced Avelino Calabaza and told committee members that the goal of the project is to honor the service and life journeys of veterans from the time of the Civil War to the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. In addition, the media project hopes to provide local schools with materials so that students learn about local veterans, including those from Indian nations, tribes and pueblos and other underserved communities to which heroes have contributed. Mr. C'de Baca also made legislative recommendations to committee members. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20090623%20Item%204%20Veteran%20Heroes%20of%20the%20American%20Southwest%20Media%20Project.pdf>.

Navajo Code Talker Museum Update (1:37 p.m.)

Regan Hawthorne, director, Navajo Code Talkers Museum Corporation, provided an informational update on the museum effort. Mr. Hawthorne outlined the challenges of conflicts arising out of the intra-agency oversight of funds and possible solutions through intra-governmental and constituent-based partnerships. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20090623%20Item%203%20Navajo%20Code%20Talker%20Museum%20Update.pdf>.

The United States Department of Defense's Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO) (2:04 p.m.)

Kelli May Douglas, southwest regional liaison, DSLO, United States Department of Defense; Senator Ivey-Soto; and Representative Sariñana gave a presentation on the mission and recommendations of the DSLO. Ms. Douglas said that since the DSLO was established by the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in 2004, it has helped state legislatures to enact more than 1,000 bills that cover a wide range of quality-of-life issues that are important to service members and their families. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20090623%20Item%205%20US%20DOD.pdf>.

Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) Jet Fuel Cleanup (2:27 p.m.)

Rick Shean, director, Resource Protection Division, Department of Environment, and Ryan Wortman, Air Force civil engineer, KAFB, gave a progress report on the KAFB jet fuel cleanup. Mr. Shean said that the cleanup of the KAFB fuel leak is one of the top priorities of the Air Force. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20090623%20Item%206%20NMED%20KAFB%20BFF%20Update.pdf>.

Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) Veterans Legacy Grant Program (3:36 p.m.)

Steven Martinez, Ph.D., director, Veterans Legacy Grant Program, SFCC, said that the program at the SFCC is in partnership with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The goal is to commemorate New Mexico veterans through the sharing of their stories. The Veterans Legacy Grant Program at SFCC was one of 16 such programs operated by colleges and universities that applied for a grant from the VA for this year but did not receive funding. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20090623%20Item%207%20SFCC%20Veterans%20Legacy%20Grant%20Program.pdf>.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.