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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 3/12/09

SPONSOR Stewart LAST UPDATED _____ HM 84

SHORT TITLE House Lounge Women's Restroom SB _____

ANALYST Hoffmann

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$0.1	Non-recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 84 requests that the Legislative Building Services Department and the Legislative Council Service develop a plan for including a women's restroom off the House lounge.

The memorial cites a number troubling facts and inequities in support of its adoption.

The failure of the United States to pass the Equal Rights Amendment is a disgrace to a democratic society.

Although New Mexico has always been progressive on the issue of equal rights for women, having passed its own constitutional amendment in 1972, the designers of the 1992 Capitol renovation did not provide for the equal right to restroom space on the first floor for men and women.

The number of women legislators has almost doubled since 1992 and the trend is expected to continue. (The FIR analyst notes that women currently comprise approximately one-third of the House membership.)

There is currently only a gentlemen's area off the House lounge, and women representatives are forced to go around to the Senate side to use the gentle ladies room.

House Memorial 84 – Page 2

Because of the unequal access to facilities, the gentle ladies of the House are often forced to choose between comfort and even health, or voting.

The memorial resolves that the Legislative Building Services Department and the Legislative Council Service be requested to develop a plan for providing access for both men and women from the House lounge to their own separate comfort stations.

The memorial further resolves that should access not be provided by the time of the special legislative session this spring or by the next legislative session, the Legislative Building Services Department convert the House lounge men's room to a women's room. If full and fair access cannot be achieved through an additional restroom or the redesign of existing restrooms to provide equal access off the House lounge then the Speaker of the House should provide for a rotating use of the House lounge bathroom, either annually or for some longer period determined by the body. Should the rotating use option be implemented, the memorial calls for the Legislative Building Services to provide for an attractive temporary façade to hide gender-specific wall-mounted appliances when it is the women's turn for exclusive use of the restroom.

The memorial directs that copies of the memorial be transmitted to the Legislative Building Services Department and to the Legislative Council Service.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

House Memorial 84 carries no appropriation.

Developing a plan for this scale of building remodeling may be outside the normal scope, mission and ability of the Legislative units assigned. It would likely be necessary to engage the services of an architect and an engineer at a cost that is difficult to estimate at this time.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The quality of the comfort and health of the gentle Ladies of the House will continue to languish as a result of unequal access to comfort facilities.

CH/mt:mc