

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the Legislature. LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Padilla LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 2/23/2025
BILL
SHORT TITLE State Police as Highest Paid NUMBER Senate Bill 321
ANALYST Ortega

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

FY25	FY26	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	\$100.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

State Personnel Office (SPO)

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Agency Analysis was Solicited but Not Received From

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

Council of State Governments (COGS)

New Mexico Municipal League (NMML)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 321

Senate Bill 321 (SB321) appropriates \$100 thousand from the general fund to the Department of Public Safety for the purpose of conducting a study of New Mexico state police salaries. SB321 also amends the New Mexico State Police Salary Act to require the secretary of public safety to review and adjust salaries of New Mexico State Police officers annually, ensuring they are the highest-paid law enforcement officers in the state.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$100 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY26 shall revert to the general fund. To sustain the implementation of SB321 beyond FY26—specifically

ensuring New Mexico State Police officers remain the highest-paid law enforcement officers in the state—the Department of Public Safety (DPS) could require increased recurring funds in its future operating budget, depending on whether the department’s budget capacity allows for necessary salary adjustments at the time.

DPS reports that it previously conducted a salary study in FY19 with Kenning Consulting at a cost of \$51 thousand and that the \$100 thousand appropriation in SB321 should be sufficient to cover the cost of an expanded study. The State Personnel Office (SPO) notes that although it does not oversee or administer the New Mexico State Police salary plan, it can serve as a resource to ensure competitive market salaries.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DPS notes that SB321 does not include funding to implement any recommendations resulting from the study beyond FY26. Upon completion of the study, DPS states it would present the contractor’s findings and recommendations to the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC). Additionally, DPS notes that Colorado has a similar requirement, mandating that Colorado State Patrol salaries be at least 99 percent of the actual average salary of the three highest-paid law enforcement agencies in the state with more than 100 commissioned officers.

SPO highlights that SB321 does not define “other law enforcement agencies in the state,” which could create challenges in determining appropriate salary benchmarks. Additionally, SPO notes that the bill does not specify a timeline for implementing salary adjustments once the funded study is completed, creating uncertainty about when or how adjustments will take effect.

AO/rl/SL2/sgs