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SENATE BILL 709

**47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006**

INTRODUCED BY

Ben D. Altamirano

AN ACT

RELATING TO HEARING IMPAIRMENTS; CREATING A FUND TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME NEW MEXICO RESIDENTS WHO NEED HEARING AIDS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. HEARING AID FUND--CREATED.--

A. The "hearing aid assistance fund" is created in the state treasury to provide assistance to eligible low-income New Mexico residents who need hearing aids but cannot afford them. The fund consists of appropriations, gifts, grants and donations. Money in the fund shall not revert or be transferred to any other fund at the end of a fiscal year. The fund shall be administered by the commission for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons and money in the fund is appropriated to the commission to carry out the purposes of this section.

.161562.1

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1 Disbursements from the fund shall be by warrants of the  
2 secretary of finance and administration on vouchers signed by  
3 the executive director of the commission or the executive  
4 director's authorized representative.

5 B. A New Mexico resident may be eligible for  
6 assistance from the fund if the resident's family income does  
7 not exceed two hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty  
8 guidelines and the resident does not receive comparable  
9 benefits from private health insurance, medicaid, medicare or  
10 any other public or private source.

11 C. The commission shall adopt and promulgate rules  
12 to carry out the provisions of this section, including the  
13 application process to be followed by persons seeking  
14 assistance from the fund, requirements for determining  
15 eligibility and determinations of awards. An award from the  
16 fund may be on a sliding scale based on income, number of  
17 applicants or other criteria determined by the commission.

18 Section 2. APPROPRIATION.--Two hundred thousand dollars  
19 (\$200,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the hearing  
20 aid assistance fund for expenditure in fiscal year 2007 and  
21 subsequent fiscal years to carry out the purposes of the fund.  
22 Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of  
23 a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.