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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/22/07

SPONSOR Rodriguez LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Study Access to Democracy for Deaf Persons SB SM 2

ANALYST Hanika Ortiz

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY07	FY08	FY09	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		\$.01				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 2 requests the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons and the Office of the Secretary of State collaborate on a study to establish communication access to ensure full participation in the democratic process for all deaf and hard-of-hearing New Mexicans and determine how to provide more interpreters at political events and closed captioning on televised political advertisements.

SM 2 requests study recommendations be reported to the appropriate legislative committee before January 30, 2008.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There may be costs associated with the Commission and Secretary of State Office, and any interim committee designated, in the dedication of staff time and resources to conduct the study that are currently directed at or planned for other activities. Any additional financial impact to private organizations or public agencies will be determined by the recommendations reported to the appropriate legislative committees.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

There are approximately one hundred ninety thousand (190,000) deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in New Mexico with the number of people with any degree of hearing loss continuing to rise. DVR reports that political equality continues to be of significant concern for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in New Mexico. These individuals often do not vote or register to vote due to inadequate communication access resulting in the inability for many to have the information needed to make an informed choice.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

In addition to sign language interpreting services, there are many new hearing assistive technologies that can be explored to assist these individuals in gaining greater access resulting in a more inclusive democratic process for all persons in New Mexico.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The appropriate legislative committees may not have the information needed to continue to promote the social, economic and political equality of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in New Mexico.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

How many of the one hundred ninety thousand (190,000) persons in New Mexico are of voting age?

AHO/nt