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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/1/08

SPONSOR Miera LAST UPDATED _____ HB 543

SHORT TITLE Veterans' Dept. Stress & Homeless Programs SB _____

ANALYST Dearing

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$20.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to General Appropriations Act

Responses Received From

Veterans' Services Department (VSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 543 appropriates \$20 thousand from the general fund to Veterans Service department to expand post-traumatic stress disorder programs services, services to address veteran homelessness, and arts and cultural programming for New Mexico veterans.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$20 thousand contained in House Bill 543 is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY09 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of a traumatic event. A traumatic event is a life-threatening event such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or physical or sexual assault in adult or childhood. Most survivors of trauma return to normal given a little time. However, some people will have stress reactions that do not go away on their own, or may even get worse over time. These individuals may develop PTSD.

People with PTSD experience three different kinds of symptoms. The first set of symptoms involves reliving the trauma in some way such as becoming upset when confronted with a traumatic reminder or thinking about the trauma when you are trying to do something else. The second set of symptoms involves either staying away from places or people that remind you of the trauma, isolating from other people, or feeling numb. The third set of symptoms includes things such as feeling on guard, irritable, or startling easily.¹

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

In all likelihood, the incidence of PTSD among returning and separating service members will increase due to recent and ongoing combat campaigns.

RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 543 relates to the Veterans' Services Department budget for FY09 as recommended in the HAFC substitution for House Bill 2. House Bill 2 includes section 4 recurring funding of \$247.5 thousand and a section 5, special appropriation of \$150 thousand for homeless veteran services to the department; and an expansion of \$65 thousand to the department in section 4, (recurring) to provide services for traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress disorder.

PD/bb

¹ PTSD Definition, National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/fact_shts/fs_what_is_ptsd.html