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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/16/08

SPONSOR Cisneros LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Congressional Gold Medal for Dr. Westphall SJM 2

ANALYST Escudero

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

No Response from Veteran Service Department (VSD)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 2 requests the New Mexico congressional delegation to introduce legislation to award Dr. Victor Westphall a congressional gold medal in recognition of his service to the United States.

- In order to honor those who fought and died in the Vietnam war, and to give the survivors a spiritual home, Dr. Victor Westphall built the Vietnam veterans peace and brotherhood chapel, which would later become the Vietnam veterans national memorial state park at Angel Fire.
- In building the Vietnam veterans peace and brotherhood chapel, Dr. Westphall honored the courage and sacrifice of his own son, Victor David Westphall, III, who gave his life in the Vietnam war.
- Dr. Westphall built the Vietnam veterans peace and brotherhood chapel in 1968, a period in which the nation was divided over the war being fought by the United States in Vietnam.

## **Senate Joint Memorial 2 – Page 2**

- Americans in 1968 were deeply divided over the Vietnam War, while the soldiers returning from the Vietnam War were often shunned and scapegoated as blameworthy for the United States' policies in Southeast Asia.
- In being the first to build a memorial honoring those who had fallen in the service of their country, Dr. Westphall bravely made a stand in the name of honor during a time of great social unrest.
- The congressional gold medal is the nation's most distinguished award given to civilians, and it is an honor befitting Dr. Westphall's acts of outstanding principle, courage and service in building the Vietnam veteran's peace and brotherhood chapel.
- It therefore be resolved by the legislature of the State of New Mexico that the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to introduce legislation to award the congressional gold medal to Dr. Victor Westphall in recognition of his great service to the nation.

Be it further resolved that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation and to the Governor .

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no appropriation attached to this legislation. The cost will be determined by the individual cost of the medal for Dr. Victor Westphall.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

Congress has expressed public gratitude for distinguished contributions, dramatized the virtues of patriotism, and perpetuated the remembrance of great events. This tradition, of authorizing individually struck gold medals bearing the portraits of those so honored or images of events in which they participated, is rich with history.

### **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The decoration is awarded to an individual who performs an outstanding deed or act of service to the security, prosperity, and national interest of the United States.

### **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

By not taking the time to honor Veterans for their dedication and desire to help survivors by providing a spiritual home, we are overlooking individuals who perform outstanding deeds or acts of service. Instituting such a tradition was considered both a legitimate function and powerful instrument of nationality.