

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 170

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .198693.1

Short Title: Veterinary Students through WICHE Program

Sponsor(s): Senator Gay G. Kernan

Analyst: James Ball

Date: January 27, 2015

Bill Summary:

SB 170 makes an appropriation to fund at least two additional slots for New Mexico students in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Veterinary Doctorate Program (VDP).

Fiscal Impact:

\$300,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Higher Education Department (HED) for expenditure in FY 16 through FY 19. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund at the end of FY 19.

HED notes that support fees for students in the field of veterinary medicine are \$31,900 for the 2014-2015 academic year and \$32,400 for the 2015-2016 academic year. Support fees through the program increase at approximately 3.5 percent annually. The appropriation in SB 170 would fund two additional students through all four years of the program.

Substantive Issues:

According to HED, in the FY 15 application cycle for the WICHE Loan-for-Service program, HED received 25 applications from VDP students. HED anticipates funding eight new applicants in FY 16 with current funding.

Background:

According to the WICHE website, residents of WICHE states can gain affordable access to university programs not offered in their own states, avoiding costly and unnecessary duplication of programs and facilities. New Mexico has been a WICHE member since 1952. Veterinary doctorate programs are offered at the:

- University of California, Davis, CA;
- Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO;
- Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR; and
- Washington State University, Pullman, WA.

According to HED, each student demonstrating adequate progress in the program is guaranteed support through the WICHE Loan-for-Service Program for four years. Upon completion of the professional program, recipients return to underserved areas of New Mexico to practice in their field.

Committee Referrals:

SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 35, *Dental Students in WICHE Program*

SB 210, *General Appropriation Act of 2015*

HB 5, *General Appropriation Act of 2015*