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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Griego **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/16/15 **LAST UPDATED** _____ **HB** _____
SHORT TITLE No County Sheriff Terms Limits, CA **SJR** 10
ANALYST A. Sánchez

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	NFI	NFI			

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Association of Counties
Secretary of State (SOS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Resolution 10 proposes to amend the New Mexico Constitution making sheriffs eligible to hold a county office after having served two consecutive four-year terms. The bill essentially removes term limits for sheriffs.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 1-16-13 NMSA 1978 and the New Mexico constitution, the SOS is required to print samples of the text of each constitutional amendment, in both Spanish and English, in an amount equal to ten percent of the registered voters in the state. The SOS is also required to publish them once a week for four weeks preceding the election in newspapers in every county in the state.

In 2014, there were 5 proposed constitutional amendments on the general election ballot, as well as 3 General Obligation Bond questions. The SOS incurred costs of \$223,212 for the statewide newspaper publications and \$25,592 for the Voter Guide publication.

The newspaper publication consisted of 2835 lines in English publications and 3402 lines in

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Spanish publications. However, the majority of the lines were attributable to General Obligation Bond Statute and Questions. Of the 2835 lines of print in English, only 756 were attributable to the 5 constitutional amendments. The SOS has deducted the costs of publishing the General Obligation Bond statute and Questions, and estimates the cost of publishing each constitutional amendment in newspapers statewide to be approximately \$12,658 per amendment.

Likewise, approximately 50% of the Voter Guide is attributable to constitutional amendments and 50% to G.O. Bonds. The costs of publishing the Voter Guide for constitutional amendments is approximately \$2559 per amendment, for a total cost of publication per amendment of **\$15,217**

A much larger fiscal consideration is the cost of ballot production. In the 2014 General Election, the combination of constitutional amendments, state G.O. bond questions, county G.O. bond questions and other questions caused Bernalillo county to use a 19” ballot with very small font. The SOS received numerous complaints about the small size of the font and difficulties in reading the small print on those ballots. Using a 19” ballot face in Bernalillo County added a surcharge of \$17,000 versus the use of a 17” ballot face. If the number of constitutional amendments on the ballot in a single general election causes Bernalillo or any other county to use longer than a 19” ballot, or to go to a 2 page ballot, the increase in ballot production costs would be significant. Such an occurrence would likely double the costs of ballot production in the affected county, as well as lead to significant complications in the process of tracking and tallying ballots.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Association of Counties opposes all term limits for elected officials. Term limits restrict the time available to plan for and enact policies and programs that require an extended length of time for implementation. Term limits arbitrarily restrict the power of citizens to return to office those county officials who have done a credible job for their constituents. They are particularly burdensome in counties with small populations where it is often difficult to find qualified and interested candidates for office.

ABS/bb