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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Steinborn ORIGINAL DATE 2/01/18
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Study School Suicides and Gun Violence SM 8

ANALYST Liu/Dinces

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY18	FY19	FY20	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		Minimal				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB 130, SB 124, SB 239, SM 2

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) Files

Responses Received From

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

New Mexico Sentencing Commission (NMSC)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 8 requests PED and LESC to study, evaluate, and report potential solutions to decrease the rates of suicide by firearms and gun violence in schools by October 1, 2018.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The memorial does not contain an appropriation. Fiscal impacts of studying and evaluating suicide by firearms and gun violence in schools is expected to be minimal, and costs to complete this report should not create significant additional operating budget impacts for the agencies involved.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, a federally funded program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, reported in 2017 that annual active shooter

incidents have increase over the past 15 years, from one incident in 2000 to 20 in 2015. Additionally, the number of people killed or injured annually in active shooter incidents has increased, from seven in 2000 to 134 in 2015. In that period, 45 active shooter incidents were on school property (23 percent), second only to 88 incidents in places of commerce (44 percent).

The most recent New Mexico school shooting happened on December 7, 2017, in the Aztec school district, which resulted in the death of two students and the suicide of the shooter. On January 14, 2014, a school shooting happened in the Roswell school district, which resulted in two students being wounded before a teacher talked the shooter into conceding the gun.

PED's Safe Schools Program currently oversees the three-year review cycle of site-specific safe school plans as required in Section 6.12.6.8.(7) NMAC. The Safe Schools Program provides technical assistance to school districts and state-chartered charter schools on school safety issues (which includes suicide and violence prevention) and works closely with the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Readiness and Emergency Management in Schools Technical Assistance Center. These entities review and provide recommendations to improve the quality of emergency operation plans, site-specific suicide awareness and prevention protocols, and site-specific active shooter protocols.

The New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) is a tool to assess the health risk behaviors and resiliency factors of New Mexico high school and middle school students and is collaboration with the PED, the New Mexico Department of Health and the University of New Mexico. YRRS data for 2015 (the most recent year for which data is available) shows that suicidal ideation and suicide attempts continue to be prevalent among adolescents in New Mexico. With the exception of a sharp decrease in 2014 suicide attempts, the rate has not changed substantially since 2009 (9.7 percent in 2009, 9.4 percent in 2015). Data from the 2015 YRRS show the following for New Mexico middle school students:

- 65.2 percent say they have ever carried a weapon, such as a gun, knife or club,
- 21.7 percent say they have ever seriously thought of killing themselves,
- 14.0 percent say they have ever made a plan how they would kill themselves, and
- 9.9 percent say they have ever tried to kill themselves.

The YRRS poses more questions to high school students than middle school students. Data from the 2015 YRRS show the following for New Mexico high school students:

- 38.4 percent say they have a gun in their home,
- 48.8 percent say they have carried a weapon (gun, knife, or club) in the past 30 days,
- 1.9 percent say they have carried a gun one day in the past 30 days,
- 1.2 percent say they have carried a gun 6 or more days in the past 30 days,
- 1.3 percent say they have carried a weapon (gun, knife, or club) on school property one day in the past 30 days,
- 2.1 percent say they have carried a weapon (gun, knife, or club) on school property 6 or more days in the past 30 days,
- 2.6 percent say they have not gone to school one day in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school,
- 1.5 percent say they have not gone to school 2 or 3 days in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school,
- 1.3 percent say they have not gone to school 6 or more days in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school,

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- 16 percent say they seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months,
- 13.6 percent say they made a plan about how to attempt suicide in the past 12 months, and
- 2.5 percent say they have actually attempted suicide in the past 12 months.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED and LESC would be required to dedicate staff to conduct this study and write the report by October 1, 2108.

RELATIONSHIP

This bill relates to House Bill 130 and Senate Bill 239, which earmark public school capital outlay funds for school security systems; Senate Bill 124, which appropriates general funds for school security personnel, training, metal detectors, and cameras; and Senate Memorial 2, which requests a study of gun-related homicides, injuries, and deaths among children.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMSC cites a 2017 study published in *Pediatrics*, which finds “nearly 1,300 children die and 5,790 are treated for gunshot wounds each year. Boys, older children, and minorities are disproportionately affected. Although unintentional firearm deaths among children declined from 2002 to 2014 and firearm homicides declined from 2007 to 2014, firearm suicides decreased between 2002 and 2007 and then showed a significant upward trend from 2007 to 2014. Rates of firearm homicide among children are higher in many Southern states and parts of the Midwest relative to other parts of the country. Firearm suicides are more dispersed across the United States with some of the highest rates occurring in Western states. Firearm homicides of younger children often occurred in multivictim events and involved intimate partner or family conflict; older children more often died in the context of crime and violence. Firearm suicides were often precipitated by situational and relationship problems. The shooter playing with a gun was the most common circumstance surrounding unintentional firearm deaths of both younger and older children.”

AOC notes in 2014, California passed the “Gun Violence Restraining Order” (GVRO) law, taking effect in 2016 and permitting a person to petition the court to remove the guns of a close relative for at least 21 days, with the option to extend that period to a year pending an additional hearing, when the relative fears their family member will commit gun violence. In 2016, Connecticut passed a law prohibiting those who are subject to a temporary restraining order from possessing firearms, thus eliminating a critical window of time during which a life or lives could be at risk. These laws reflect a growing trend and desire to use the courts to keep firearms out of the hands of those who would harm themselves or others. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures staffer in 2017, California and Connecticut are the only states with gun violence protection order laws. Bills on the topic were proposed or carried over in at least six states in 2016, but none passed. While these laws are presumably targeted to remove firearms from adults, based on the concern an adult may harm the adult or others, it is possible that the reach of the GVRO could be extended to include the removal of firearms from the possession of an adult in close contact or proximity to a juvenile who might be at risk of harming self or others. Other methods to reduce gun violence in youth and adults include the establishment of special courts to focus on gun crimes, such as in Rhode Island.

A 2002 Princeton University study found youth gun homicides have increased, even as annual deaths have decreased in the past few years. A 2016 study published in *American Psychologist*, noted solutions to this issues should be examined within a broad context to include stakeholders throughout public health, education, and safety agencies, as the factors related to gun violence include: behavioral health, family, school, and society at large. According to a 2002 study by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, solutions also need to be examined across various policy areas as behavioral methods have been generally ineffective for youth gun violence.

SL/sb