

LFC Requester:	Connor Jorgensen
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AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2025 REGULAR SESSION

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO
AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov and email to billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov
(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Date Prepared: 02/11/2025 *Check all that apply:*
Bill Number: HB304 Original Correction
 Amendment Substitute

Sponsor: Rebecca Dow, Mark Murphy **Agency Name and Code** 790 – Department of Public Safety
Short Title: Officer Loan Repayment Program **Number:** _____
Person Writing Sonya K. Chavez
Phone: 505414228 **Email:** Sonya.chavez@dps.nm.gov

SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26		
NFI	NFI	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () indicate expenditure decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26	FY27		
NFI	NFI	NFI	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	NFI	NFI	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Authorizes the Higher Education Department to award grants to repay loans for undergraduate education and law enforcement training obtained by a law enforcement officer, to a maximum of \$25,000. Creates a fund for the awards. Requires reporting.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal impact to DPS.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This bill limits the definition of a law enforcement officer to those employed by a New Mexico county or municipal agency, excluding New Mexico State Police and other state-employed officers.

The bill provides student loan repayment assistance for law enforcement officers, helping agencies recruit and retain qualified personnel. Expanding eligibility to include state police officers would extend this benefit statewide, improving law enforcement coverage in both urban and rural areas. Including state police could help address staffing shortages in remote regions, enhancing public safety across New Mexico

However, as currently written, the bill could face possible legal challenges. It could be argued that the bill violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 2, Section 18 of the New Mexico Constitution since it only provides loan repayment benefits to certain law enforcement officers. Additionally, an argument could be made that the bill creates an arbitrary and capricious classification and could be challenged on the grounds that it does not meet a rational basis test because there may be no compelling governmental interest that justifies the exclusion of state police officers from loan repayment assistance. Lastly, the bill could be challenged for conflicting with federal policies that would provide loan repayment assistance to all law enforcement officers, like the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

None.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Status Quo will remain.

AMENDMENTS

None.