

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

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: Senate Bill 446 appropriates \$200,000 to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for the Political Science Department to conduct research on the demographics of individuals who speak at zoning and planning hearings or meetings and city council hearings or meetings on the topics of housing and construction for fiscal year 2026. This will entail data collection and analysis culminating in a report to be submitted to the legislative committee by June 30, 2026. Data collected will include information about age, sex, race, homeownership status, place of birth, and participation or membership in a neighborhood or homeowner association.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This bill would provide fiscal resources to allow the Department of Political Science to carry out a research project analyzing patterns of participation in local meetings around housing and planning. To carry out this research, we will dedicate three department faculty to oversee the project, support two graduate students to organize and collect data and hire undergraduate student interns to attend meetings that will occur throughout the year in various locations in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Research expenses will also include travel and may need to include compensation for participation in the survey.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Department of Political Science has expertise and interest in providing research that can inform policy in the state. Our capacity has decreased significantly due to retirements and deaths in the department, so we lack the ability to carry out such work without additional financial support.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The Department of Political Science is undergoing a strategic planning process in which doing applied policy research relevant to the communities we serve will be an ever-increasing part of our central mission. We, therefore, welcome the opportunity to conduct this research as it will help us to build this capacity that is of critical importance for the future of the department and increases our capabilities in serving the state in policy analysis needs.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Administrative responsibilities associated with this research will be assumed by existing faculty. The research will require hiring of undergraduate and graduate research assistants and include collaboration with experts affiliated with the department. The fiscal management of the grant will be done by the department administrator. Research coordinators may need to apply to the Intuition Review Board for authorization of work that includes “Human Research Subjects”. The coordination of the work will entail commitments of coordination, data collection, travel and analysis that will last throughout the year.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None.

TECHNICAL ISSUE

There may be unexpected complications in collecting the data that we cannot anticipate at this time. We will know more once we commence with the work and will abide by standard procedures in collecting this data, including Institutional Review Board in human subjects research. However, this research has been successfully conducted in Massachusetts and provides a replicable template for data collection.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

This research will help lawmakers and policy advocates better understand the participatory forums in the state. Without this research, we will continue to lack an understanding of such policy making processes and patterns in citizen participation.

AMENDMENTS

None.