F I S C A L   I M P A C T   R E P O R T

SPONSOR	Steinborn/Pope	**LAST UPDATED**	
		ORIGINAL DATE 2/3/25	
SHORT TITLE	Regent Nominating Committees, CA	**BILL NUMBER**	Senate Joint Resolution 7
		ANALYST Jorgensen	

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT*
(dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Election Costs	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	$35-$50	$35-$50	Nonrecurring	General Fund
Higher Education Institutions	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Recurring	Agency Operating Budgets
Total	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	$35-$50	$35-$50	Nonrecurring	General Fund

Parentheses ( ) indicate expenditure decreases.
*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From
Higher Education Department (HED)
Independent Community Colleges (NMICC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Joint Resolution 7

Senate Joint Resolution 7 (SJR7) would amend the New Mexico constitution to require the governor to select regents of higher education institutions from a list provided by a nominating committee for each institution. The resolution states that "the Legislature shall provide by law for the appointment, terms, powers and duties of a nominating committee provided that no more than fifty percent of the members of a nominating committee shall be members of the same political party."

The joint resolution provides the amendment be put before the voters at the next general election (November 2026) or a special election called for the purpose of considering the amendment. The amendment would only be effective if approved by voters.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 1-16-4 NMSA 1978 and the New Mexico Constitution, the Secretary of State (SOS) is required to print samples of the text of each constitutional amendment in both Spanish and English in an amount equal to 10 percent of the registered voters in the state. SOS is required

to publish the samples once a week for four weeks preceding the election in newspapers in every county in the state. Further, the number of constitutional amendments on the ballot may impact the ballot page size or cause the ballot to be more than one page, also increasing costs. The estimated cost per constitutional amendment is $35 thousand to $50 thousand, depending on the size and number of ballots and if additional ballot stations are needed.

SJR7 will likely have a recurring cost related to staffing for the nominating committee, per diem for the members, and other operational costs. However, these costs will result from statutory changes made after enactment of the constitutional amendment rather than from the amendment itself. Further, those costs are likely to be relatively small and are likely to be absorbed in the existing operating budgets. Therefore, the operational cost is listed as indeterminate but minimal.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Currently, the constitution provides that "the governor shall nominate and by and with the consent of the senate shall appoint members of each board of regents for each of the institutions." Under the provisions of SJR7, the governor would nominate from a list and the senate would confirm those nominations.

Since 2010, the Senate has declined to confirm two individuals nominated to serve as regents.

The amendment does not include provisions determining the number of individuals on the nominating committee nor terms. It appears that new nominating committees would be created for each institution.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

It is unclear what, if any, additional costs would be incurred as a result of SJR7. For example, would members receive staff support or mileage and per diem and from what source would these costs be paid.

CJ/hj/SL2