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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2026**

Bill Number	<u>SB70</u>	Sponsor	<u>Soules</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.232805.2</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SHPAC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Universal Basic Income Pilot Project</u>		
Analyst	<u>Andrews</u>	Original Date	<u>1/27/2026</u>
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FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 70 (SB70) would create a two-year pilot program and evaluate the financial impact of providing a universal basic income to a low-income pregnant person of \$1,500 per month from pregnancy through the first year of life of an infant. This pilot program would be limited to pregnant participants who have an income at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level and would be administered by the Department of Health (DOH) from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028.

The pilot program would consist of a control group and a test group of voluntary participants who must comply with the following provisions to maintain eligibility: attending prenatal appointments, completing surveys and research forms throughout the duration of the program, and receiving home visitation services from the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) or an entity approved by ECECD. If a participant fails to maintain eligibility, the participant would be placed into the control group for the remainder of the program. DOH would report the findings of the program to LESC by December 1, 2028.

FISCAL IMPACT

SB70 would appropriate \$80 million from the general fund to DOH for expenditure in FY27 and FY28 to conduct a universal basic income pilot program. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY28 shall revert to the general fund.

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 (HB2/HAFCS) does not include an appropriation for SB70.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Background. Early childhood is a profound life stage for physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. [Research](#) shows the brain undergoes rapid development in the first few years of life, forming more than 1 million new neural connections every second. This initial brain development has the potential to set the stage for later learning, providing either a strong or fragile foundation that can influence learning for the rest of a child's life. Pregnancy is also an important period with immediate and long-term impacts on children's health, with a strong body of [research](#) establishing the far-reaching importance of the physical, economic, and social environment during pregnancy.

In the United States, recent [research](#) shows the birth of a child increases the likelihood of poverty for mothers by 33 percent, with over one out of four mothers experiencing poverty in the month after birth; spikes in poverty following a birth were found to be particularly pronounced for Black and Latina mothers. New Mexico has one of the highest rates of poverty in the nation, with 24 percent of our children living at or below the federal poverty level in 2022. Income supplementation for parents, such as a child tax credit, has been shown to decrease disparities and improve health equity. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Congress expanded the federal child tax credit. Not only did child poverty rates [decline by 46 percent](#) in response to the expanded federal child tax credit, but the gaps between the poverty rates for children of color and those for white children also narrowed.

Universal Basic Income Programs Nationwide. Columbia University's Center on Poverty and Social Policy [notes](#) since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been increasing interest by states and municipalities in regular cash payments as an approach to help families meet their expenses and achieve their goals for themselves and their children. Guaranteed income pilot programs for pregnant persons have also been started as a way to address high national maternal mortality rates.

Recently, similar pilot programs for low-income pregnant persons have been started in several states and municipalities including, but not limited to, [Colorado](#), [Delaware](#), [Baltimore](#), [Philadelphia](#), and [Flint](#).

[New York City](#) transitioned The Bridge Project, which provides three years of no-strings-attached cash during the first three years of a child's life to low-income parents and their babies, from a pilot to a permanent program in 2023. [California](#) expanded a San Francisco Department of Health program that provides monthly income supplements to pregnant Black women to reduce racial health disparities to four additional counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, and Riverside) in 2022.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

DOH would be responsible for designing and administering SB70, including establishing program parameters and evaluation criteria. As noted by New Mexico Department of Justice and Early Childhood Education and Care Department agency analysis, DOH rulemaking should include defining a test group and a true control group composed of volunteer participants—not merely individuals excluded for noncompliance with pilot requirements (e.g., failure to complete home visits, surveys, or prenatal appointments). DOH would also need to collaborate with the Early Childhood Education and Care Department, which would oversee required home visitation.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

- New Mexico Department of Justice (NMDOJ)
- Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)
- Health Care Authority (HCA)
- Public Education Department (PED)

MCA/mam/jkh