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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: House Memorial 13

SHORT TITLE: 10-Year Criminal Justice Plan

SPONSOR: Romero/Chandler

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: _____ **DATE:** 02/06/2026 **ANALYST:** Sanchez

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
LOPD	No fiscal impact	\$7.7	No fiscal impact	\$7.7	Nonrecurring	General Fund
LFC	No fiscal impact	\$266.0	No fiscal impact	\$266.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund
Total	No fiscal impact	\$273.7	No fiscal impact	\$273.7	Nonrecurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Administrative Office of the Courts
Administrative Office of the District Attorneys
Law Offices of the Public Defender
New Mexico Sentencing Commission
Children, Youth and Families Department
Corrections Department
Department of Public Safety

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Memorial 13

House Memorial 13 (HM13) formally requests that the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), within its existing statutory authority under Section 2-5-4 NMSA 1978, conduct studies, evaluations, and policy analyses for the Legislature.

Substantively, HM13 requests that LFC convene and administer a multidisciplinary task force to develop a comprehensive ten-year plan and long-term funding strategy to address systemic and structural problems in New Mexico's criminal justice system. The memorial grounds this request in the findings of the LFC's December 2025 report, [Policy Spotlight: Felony Arrests and Outcomes](#), which documented persistent inefficiencies and breakdowns across the criminal

justice continuum, including law enforcement, prosecution, courts, defense services, and corrections. The memorial asserts that these systemic issues undermine overall system performance, erode public safety outcomes, and contribute to unequal justice under the law. It frames the proposed task force as a mechanism to coordinate planning and reform across agencies operating under fragmented governance and funding structures.

HM13 specifies that LFC would lead the task force and provide staff support, and that the task force would consist of no more than thirty members drawn from a broad range of stakeholders. These include, but are not limited to, leaders from prevention and diversion programs, 911 systems, local and state law enforcement agencies including tribal and pueblo law enforcement, prosecutors, the defense bar and public defender leadership, juvenile probation and parole, juvenile detention centers, correctional officers, probation officers, magistrate and district court judges including specialty and children's court judges, legislators, and members of the public. The memorial contemplates that task force members would be selected through an application process overseen by legislative leadership, with final selection involving bipartisan legislative participation.

The memorial directs the task force to develop recommendations in several defined policy areas rather than to draft statutory language directly. These areas include establishing a permanent planning and oversight framework to integrate local justice-system planning into a coordinated statewide modernization strategy and to monitor implementation for at least ten years; developing a long-term funding strategy, potentially including the creation of an investment or income-generating fund, to support implementation of the plan; and identifying the most critical legislative actions needed in the near term for consideration in the 2027 legislative session. The memorial also directs the task force to examine workforce modernization across the justice system, including position descriptions, educational requirements, staffing adequacy, training curricula, and alignment with national standards and best practices.

In addition, HM13 calls on the task force to address structural coordination issues, including establishing judicial-district-level planning functions that link state programs to local needs and align justice-system planning with the behavioral health regional planning framework established in 2025 and administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts. The task force is also asked to identify standardized data elements and performance metrics necessary to evaluate both individual agency performance and systemwide outcomes, and to develop recommendations for career pathways for justice-system professionals, including linkages to the state's higher education system.

Finally, HM13 establishes reporting requirements but does not impose statutory deadlines or penalties. It requests that the task force submit a report of findings and recommendations to the interim Courts, Corrections, and Justice Committee by November 26, 2026, and to the governor and the Legislature by January 5, 2027, for consideration during the 2027 regular legislative session. The memorial further requests that copies be transmitted to LFC, the Office of the Governor, the Attorney General (N MAG), the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Administrative Office of the District Attorneys (AODA), and the Chief Public Defender. As introduced, the memorial contains no appropriation, no statutory amendments, and no direct legal mandates, and its effect is limited to requesting coordinated planning and analysis within existing governmental authority.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the

Legislature adjourns, which is May 20, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

House Memorial 13 does not contain an appropriation and, as a memorial, does not create binding legal requirements; however, it would have fiscal implications for state agencies through increased staff time and workload associated with participation in the proposed task force and development of the ten-year plan. Multiple agencies, including AOC, AODA, the Law Offices of the Public Defender (LOPD), the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Corrections Department, the Children, Youth and Families Department, and the Sentencing Commission (NMSC), report that participation would require significant staff time from senior or subject-matter experts. While most agencies indicate these costs would be absorbed within existing resources in the near term, several analyses note that participation would divert staff from core operational responsibilities, which could have indirect operational and performance implications. Some agencies also note that long-term fiscal impacts could arise if the task force's recommendations are later adopted, including costs related to workforce restructuring, modernizing training, integrating data systems, governance changes, or new funding mechanisms. However, those impacts cannot be quantified at this stage.

In addition, the memorial would directly affect LFC's workload. HM13 assigns the LFC responsibility for convening, staffing, and administering a large, multidisciplinary task force; coordinating agency participation; managing data and policy analysis; and developing recommendations and reports within an accelerated timeline. Based on the scope and intensity of the contemplated work, implementation would likely require additional analytical capacity within the committee, particularly focused on public safety and criminal justice systems. LFC staff estimate that this workload could require at least two additional analyst positions in the early part of FY27. With an estimated cost of approximately \$133 thousand per analyst, including salary and benefits, the resulting fiscal impact on the LFC is roughly \$266 thousand in nonrecurring expenses in FY27. These costs would be incurred to support research, coordination, stakeholder engagement, and the preparation of required reports and recommendations for the memorial.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HM13 raises several significant non-fiscal issues related to governance, scope, and implementation. Multiple agency analyses note that the memorial sets an ambitious, wide-ranging charge for the task force, spanning workforce standards, training, data governance, alignment of local and statewide planning, behavioral health coordination, and long-term oversight. Agencies such as LOPD and the NMSC note that many of these functions are already partially addressed through existing councils, commissions, work groups, and regional planning structures, and the memorial does not clearly specify how the proposed task force would interact with, supersede, or integrate the work of those existing bodies. The absence of clarity regarding coordination increases the risk of overlapping responsibilities, parallel planning processes, or inconsistent recommendations across entities.

Several agencies also identify ambiguity in the task force's composition and selection process. AOC, AODA, and the NMSC note that while the memorial lists broad categories of stakeholders, it does not clearly define how many representatives from each sector would

participate, how judicial representation would be balanced across trial and appellate interests, or how applications would be solicited and evaluated. Some analyses suggest the language could be interpreted inconsistently with respect to legislative membership and selection authority, which may affect perceptions of the task force's representativeness and transparency.

Timing and continuity are also identified as significant considerations. AOC and NMSC point out that the memorial's reporting deadlines require the task force to complete complex, systemwide analysis within a relatively short timeframe, coinciding with a general election cycle and a transition in executive leadership and agency management. Agencies note that the effectiveness of long-term planning recommendations may depend on sustained engagement by officials responsible for implementation after January 2027, raising questions about continuity and institutional commitment across administrations.

Several agencies emphasize operational and institutional considerations tied to their statutory roles. DPS notes that while the memorial references the NM State Police, the issues identified in the underlying LFC report implicate multiple DPS divisions, including NM Law Enforcement Academy, the forensic laboratory, records and data systems, and IT functions, and that incomplete representation could limit the usefulness of task force recommendations. LOPD and AODA highlight that participation would require sustained engagement by senior attorneys and leadership staff with specialized expertise, and that the breadth of topics under consideration extends beyond traditional criminal justice operations to include human resources, education systems, data governance, and behavioral health policy.

Finally, several analyses indicate that HM13 does not establish binding authority, mechanisms for implementation, or accountability structures beyond reporting requirements. Agencies note that while the memorial requests development of a ten-year plan and oversight framework, subsequent legislative or executive action would be required to implement any recommendations. As a result, the effectiveness of the task force's work would depend on future decisions by the Legislature and executive agencies, as well as on the extent to which its recommendations align with existing statutory frameworks, operational constraints, and institutional capacities.

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