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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**SPONSOR** Romero, A
**LAST UPDATED** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ORIGINAL DATE** 2/6/2023  
**SHORT TITLE** Create Office of Peacebuilding
**BILL**  
**NUMBER** House Bill 171  
**ANALYST** Hanika-Ortiz

### APPROPRIATION\* (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY23	FY24		
	\$500.0	Recurring	General Fund

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

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT\* (dollars in thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	No fiscal impact	\$328.0	\$328.0	\$656.0	Recurring	General Fund

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

### Sources of Information

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Department of Public Safety (DPS)  
 Higher Education Institutions (HEI)  
 New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD)  
 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)  
 New Mexico Attorney General (NMAG)  
 Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)  
 Department of Health (DOH)

## SUMMARY

### Synopsis of House Bill 171

House Bill 171 (HB171) appropriates \$500 thousand from the general fund to the new office of peacebuilding to carry out the purposes of the Office of Peacebuilding Act (act).

More specifically,

- Section 1 and Section 2 title the act and propose definitions for “dialogue process” and “restorative justice,” which allows everyone in a conflict to be heard, to acknowledge responsibility for harm, and to seek ways to repair the harm and restore relationships;
- Section 3 establishes the “office of peacebuilding” administratively attached to DFA;
- Section 4 requires the director to be appointed by the governor with consent of the Senate, and have two years of conflict resolution and related experiences, and trainings in such;
- Section 5 provides for powers and duties including applying resources and skills of the office statewide, assisting in the analysis and growth of policies and programs, in collaboration with other agencies and nongovernmental organizations, integrating a peace education curriculum into teacher training programs, and accepting grants and gifts;
- Section 6 creates a “citizens’ peacebuilding advisory council” with the director and 11 members from public partners and from DPS, DOH, DVS, PED, HEI, and IAD. The council will meet at least twice annually and submit an annual report to the governor; and
- Section 7 makes an appropriation for expenditures in FY24 and subsequent fiscal years.

The effective date of this bill is July 1, 2023.

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The appropriation of \$500 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of any fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

The bill administratively attaches the new office to DFA, which estimates administrative costs of \$328 thousand year one. DFA noted since grants to the office are discretionary, they are difficult to estimate. The bill also allows sub-grants for community peacebuilding initiatives and programs. Therefore, in addition to being a grant maker, the office will need to be successful at fundraising.

The bill could result in the need for additional general fund appropriations in subsequent fiscal years to support an established office, for staff salaries and benefits, for council expenses, and for per diem and mileage as provided non-salaried public officers in the Per Diem and Mileage Act.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, unintentional and violence-related injuries, including suicide, were among the top 10 causes of U.S. deaths for all age groups and caused nearly 27 million nonfatal emergency department visits in 2019. The estimated U.S. economic cost of those injuries, including violence-related fatalities, in 2019 was \$4.2 trillion.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

HB171 creates both an office of peacebuilding and citizens’ peacebuilding advisory council. The primary purposes of the office would be to promote peace by way of public education, assist with existing policies and programs and development of new approaches in collaboration with government agencies and others, conduct information gathering, provide sponsorship and

conferences, provide grants, and integrate peace education curriculum into training for teachers.

UNM said the Office of Peacebuilding Act, as designed, will support economic health and human development with sustainable pathways to non-violence through conflict transformation.

DOH said that violence experienced in childhood can negatively impact a person's quality of life, health and wellbeing over the lifetime, and ultimately lead to premature death.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The new council's role would be advisory, with the policymaking and executive authority assigned to the director. The council would be composed of 11 members and the director. The 11 members would be composed of representatives from peace advocacy organizations, the New Mexico faith community, and government agencies with a vested interest in peacebuilding.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Agencies identified in the bill would need to staff the new council using existing resources.

UNM reported that within higher educational institutions in New Mexico, an underfunded Peace Studies University program was defunded. The Office of Peacebuilding Act can supply leadership, and baseline and specific knowledge and actions for further developments of positive peace.

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

Similar or identical bills were introduced as SB294 in 2015, SB60 in 2016, and SB276 in 2019.

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

DOH noted that HB171 indicates that the office of peacebuilding would be involved in implementing measures and programs in New Mexico that would align with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommended strategies to prevent adverse childhood events.

DOH also commented there is limited data about any effect the creation of such an office at the state level would be on public health and well-being outcomes. On the global scale, since 2005, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office has assisted and supported the Peacebuilding Commission with strategic advice and policy guidance, administered the peacebuilding fund, and supported the Secretary-General in coordinating United Nations agencies' peacebuilding efforts.

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

There will be no overarching office in New Mexico, to work with advocacy organizations, faith communities, and state and local governments to build local capacities to manage conflict.