

**MINUTES
of the
FIRST MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**June 4, 2025
State Capitol, Room 322
Santa Fe**

The first meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Senator Harold Pope, chair, on June 4, 2025 at 10:06 a.m. in Room 322 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Sen. Harold Pope, Chair
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana, Vice Chair
Rep. Art De La Cruz
Rep. Luis M. Terrazas

Absent

Sen. Jay C. Block
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Sen. Nicholas A. Paul
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto

Advisory Members

Rep. Catherine J. Cullen
Rep. Stefani Lord
Rep. Angelita Mejia

Sen. Pat Boone
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Sen. Gabriel Ramos
Rep. Andrea Reeb

Staff

Erin Bond, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Domenica Nieto, Research Assistant, LCS
Jeret Fleetwood, Project Coordinator, LCS

Guests

The guest list in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

References to Webcast

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Wednesday, June 4

Welcome and Introductions (10:06 a.m.)

Senator Pope called the meeting to order and asked committee members and staff to introduce themselves.

Update from the Veterans' Services Department (10:12 a.m.)

Jamison Herrera, secretary, Veterans' Services Department, provided a brief overview and update on the needs of the department. Secretary Herrera discussed core programs, highlighting topics such as coordinating with county assessors on tax exemptions for veterans and with the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department to provide state park day passes for veterans, as provided by House Bill 161 (2025). Additionally, Secretary Herrera discussed the conditions of state veterans cemeteries, explained that the department is now in charge of the Taos State Veterans Cemetery and expressed the need for permanent personnel to be funded through the General Fund. He also discussed various forms of outreach the department is performing, including addressing homelessness among veteran communities. Secretary Herrera then answered questions from committee members. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=MVAC&Date=6/4/2025&ItemNumber=1>.

2025 Proposed Work Plan and Meeting Schedule (11:10 a.m.)

Committee members discussed and made changes to the 2025 proposed interim work plan and meeting schedule. The approved work plan and meeting schedule can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Publications/Work_Plans/MVACworkplan25.pdf.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.