

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

**September 14, 2021
New Mexico State University-Grants Theater
Grants**

The fourth meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative Harry Garcia, co-chair, on September 14, 2021 at 10:15 a.m. at the theater at New Mexico State University (NMSU)-Grants in Grants.

Present

Rep. Harry Garcia, Co-Chair
Sen. Harold Pope, Co-Chair
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Rep. Debra M. Sariñana
Rep. Luis M. Terrazas

Absent

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna

Advisory Members

Rep. Rachel A. Black
Rep. Randal S. Crowder
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Stefani Lord

Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Meredith A. Dixon
Sen. Michael Padilla
Rep. Randall T. Pettigrew
Rep. Jane E. Powdrell-Culbert
Rep. G. Andrés Romero

Staff

Jeret Fleetwood, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Nancy Martinez, Research Assistant, LCS

Guests

The guest list is 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.

Tuesday, September 14

Welcome and Introductions (10:15 a.m.)

Representative Garcia asked members of the committee, staff and audience to introduce themselves.

Martin "Modey" Hicks, mayor, Grants, welcomed the committee to Grants. He discussed his views on mask mandates and the effects of vaccination requirements on employment, particularly at the area's correctional institutions. Representative Garcia reiterated to meeting attendees that masks were required at the meeting. The committee temporarily recessed at 10:41 a.m.

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 11:03 a.m.

To'Hajiilee Veteran Center (11:04 a.m.)

Gilbert A. Platero, commander, To'Hajiilee Navajo Veterans Organization, introduced Joe Delgarito, veteran, United States Army, and presented an overview of the To'Hajiilee Navajo Veterans Organization and highlighted the different events for veterans held at the To'Hajiilee Veteran Center. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20091421%20Item%201%20To'Hajiilee%20Veteran%20Center.pdf>

Thoreau Veterans Center (11:48 a.m.)

Lester Emerson, veteran, United States Marine Corps, gave a presentation on the Thoreau Veterans Center.

Healing America's Heroes (1:15 p.m.)

Edward Crain, director, Healing America's Heroes, introduced Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez, former state representative, and gave a presentation on Healing America's Heroes and the services that the program offers to veterans. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20091421%20Item%203%20Healing%20America's%20Heroes.pdf>

Welcome — NMSU-Grants (1:59 p.m.)

Dr. Marlene Chavez-Toivanen, vice president for academic affairs, NMSU-Grants, welcomed the committee and gave a presentation about NMSU-Grants. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20091421%20Item%204%20NMSU-Grants.pdf>

New Mexico Veteran Issues (2:19 p.m.)

Alan Martinez gave a presentation about the need for mental health care for veterans. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20091421%20Item%205%20Veteran%20Issues.pdf>

Military/Veterans Leadership Council — Legislative Priorities (2:56 p.m.)

Lieutenant Colonel Walter Paul, Army National Guard, and vice chair, Military/Veterans Leadership Council, gave a presentation on the leadership council and provided an overview of legislative priorities, particularly a state income tax exemption for military retirement pay. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/MVAC%20091421%20Item%206%20MVLC.pdf>

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.