

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

**May 15, 2026
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 May 15, 2026 at 10:12 a.m. in Room 322 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Sen. Harold Pope, Chair
Rep. Art De La Cruz
Sen. Rex Wilson

Absent

Rep. Debra M. Sariñana, Vice Chair
Sen. Jay C. Block
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto
Rep. Luis M. Terrazas

Advisory Members

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Rep. Catherine J. Cullen
Rep. Joy Garratt
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Rep. Angelita Mejia

Sen. Pat Boone
Rep. Stefani Lord
Sen. Gabriel Ramos

Staff

Erin Bond, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Sara Wiedmaier, Researcher, 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.

Friday, May 15

Welcome and Introductions (10:12 a.m.)

Senator Pope asked committee members and staff to introduce themselves.

Update from the Department of Military Affairs (10:16 a.m.)

Major General Miguel Aguilar, adjutant general, New Mexico National Guard, provided an overview of legislation passed in the 2026 legislative session that impacted and related to the New Mexico National Guard. He discussed the New Mexico National Guard's Community Emergency Response Team, which trains guards and coordinates with local law enforcement on emergencies such as fires and floods, and noted the need for recurring funding. He also discussed health care coverage for national guards and service members' obstacles with the reimbursement model. Additionally, General Aguilar expressed support for active duty tax exemptions and the New Mexico governor's summer challenge program, which aims to engage students across the state. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=MVAC&Date=5/15/2026&ItemNumber=1>.

Discussion of Proposed Interim Work Plan and Meeting Schedule (11:13 a.m.)

Committee members discussed and made changes to the 2026 proposed interim work plan and meeting schedule.

Public Comment (11:25 a.m.)

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.