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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sandoval **DATE TYPED** 2/14/04 **HB** HJR 3/aHVEC/HF1 # 1

SHORT TITLE Desert Storm Veterans Scholarships, CA **SB** _____

ANALYST Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY04	FY05	FY04	FY05		
			See Narrative		

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Department of Veterans Services (DVS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HF1 # 1 Amendment

The House Floor Amendment # 1 strikes all HVEC amendments.

Synopsis of HVEC Amendment

The House Voters and Elections Committee amends the bill by broadening the definition for the veteran’s scholarship program from one that considered “Desert Storm” veterans to “NM veterans” who have not received a bachelor’s degrees or higher degrees and whose eligibility to receive federally funded educational benefits has expired. The amendment may increase the scholarship program significantly and therefore costs may increase dramatically.

The title of the bill may need to change by removing the language “Desert Storm” to comply with the amendments.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Joint Resolution 3 proposes an amendment to the Constitution requesting the establishment of a scholarship program for Desert Storm Veterans. The resolution also provides that the

proposed constitutional amendment be submitted for a vote at the next general election or at a special election called to consider the proposed amendment.

Significant Issues

The State of New Mexico Desert Storm Veteran Population numbers 25,000. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers the GI Bill which provides funds to veterans for schooling. This money must be used before the ten year anniversary of the veterans release from active duty. This means that any veteran discharged before 1994 no longer has access to any GI Bill money. This program would allow these veterans to further their education and pursue higher paying jobs and increase their earning power.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Secretary of State notes it will cost \$40 thousand for this constitutional amendment.

The Commission on Higher Education now expends approximately \$90 thousand per year on the Vietnam Veteran Scholarship program. The Vietnam Veteran Scholarship Program serves about 80 veterans per year. The Vietnam Scholarship provides approximately \$1200 per student per year. The Desert Storm Veteran population is larger than the Vietnam Veteran population and would require more funding.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Department of Veterans Services would be responsible for reviewing and approving the scholarship program applications and providing reports to each school and the Commission on Higher Education.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The Attorney General notes that pursuant to NMSA 1978 Section 12-2A-10(A) any later-enacted statute amending the same statutory sections in this bill would govern over the provisions herein.

BD/dm:yr