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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Heaton DATE TYPED 1/26/04 HB 34

SHORT TITLE Programs Affecting New Mexico Children SB _____

ANALYST Baca

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$1,031.2			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates SB 180

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 34 appropriates a total of \$1,031,195 to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for expenditure in FY06 for the following purposes:

Judicial Unit	Amount	Purpose
AOC	\$356,313	for the court appointed attorney fees fund to increase the number of compensated hours paid statewide to attorneys in abuse and neglect cases
AOC	\$305,676	to replace federal grant funds for mediation services in abuse and neglect cases in the second, fifth, sixth, seventh, eleventh and thirteen judicial districts, expand mediation services to additional judicial districts and fund network services for training and quality assurance
AOC	\$128,248	to expand existing court appointed special advocate (CASA) programs in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eleventh, twelfth and thirteen judicial districts and add new programs in the sixth and thirteenth judicial districts
AOC	\$240,958	to maintain existing access and visitation programs in the first, second, fifth, ninth, and thirteen judicial districts, add new programs to additional judicial districts and fund network services for training and quality assurance

Significant Issues

According to CYFD, the bill continues funding to existing programs expands visitation and network services and replaces federal grant funds for mediation services. Further, the CYFD states that the number of abuse and neglect reports accepted for investigation has increases 10% in the last year, and the number of children in care has increased 15%. The AOC reports that this bill provides funding for court services for the state’s most vulnerable population: children who are the victims of abuse and neglect.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

AOC and CYFD report that funding existing and enhanced judicial services decreases the likelihood of repeat maltreatment and will enable the respective agencies to more efficiently and effectively carry out their assigned responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1,031,195 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The agencies receiving the appropriations will be able to implement the responsibilities with minimal administrative impact.

DUPLICATION/LICT

HB34 duplicates SB 180, Programs Affecting New Mexico Children.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL?

The AOC writes that:

“It has been difficult to make ends meet with the current funding available for these programs. If additional state funds are not allocated, some programs (Supervised Visitation and the Children’s Court Mediation) will cease. The AOC may need to seek a supplemental appropriation to cover the costs of paying for court appointed attorneys as required by the constitution, statute, and case law.”

LB/lg