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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 3/08/2007

SPONSOR Barela LAST UPDATED _____ HM 76

SHORT TITLE Fully Fund Veteran Health Care Services SB _____

ANALYST Schuss

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to House Memorial 79

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 76 requests that the New Mexico Congressional Delegation assure full mandatory funding for veterans' health care services and to recognize the health care obligations of the United States to the country's veterans

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

House Memorial 76 states that the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs' mission and motto is "to care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan" and President George Washington stated, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportionate to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country". Whenever the United States Military has been called upon to send forces into harm's way, including sons and daughters of our great state, they have proudly answered the call and we, as United States citizens, have promised our troops through military enlistment contracts comprehensive, quality accessible health care for those veterans honorably discharged from the United States military, past, present and future.

Although the legislative bodies of our government at all levels have recognized the importance of supporting those who serve our great country, legislation itself has fallen short of meeting the

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health care needs of our veterans. The current discretionary funding mechanisms for veterans' health care is beset by numerous flaws, preventing many veterans from receiving the quality health care they earned and deserve. March 16, 2006, the United States Senate voted down mandatory funding for veterans' health care services that would have insured mandatory funding for our veterans' health care needs. A Federal Government accountability office report in 2005 highlighted the lack of resources experienced by the Federal Veterans Health Administration and its understaffed workforce as they attempt to process an increasing backlog of our veterans' claims. Anthony Principi, former Federal Secretary of Veterans Affairs, has publicly stated that the Department of Veterans Affairs has been struggling to provide promised health care services to the rapidly rising number of veterans requiring health care services.

The House of Representatives of the State of New Mexico requests that its members, as proud citizens of this great nation, fully support mandatory funding for veterans' health care services. HM 76 also requests that the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate be requested to ensure that the health care obligations to our veterans be recognized and that legislation be introduced and passed for signing by the President of the United States to guarantee full mandatory funding of veterans' health care services.

BS/mt