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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE
LAST UPDATED _____

SPONSOR Pinto _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Veteran Database To Count Navajo Veterans SB 1022

ANALYST Weber

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$92.0	Recurring	General

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

Veterans Services Department (VSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 1022 appropriates \$92,020 thousand from the general fund to the Indian Affairs Department to employ a qualified person in Shiprock to develop a database of veterans' profiles and statistics in order to provide an accurate count of Navajo veterans.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$92,020 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2008 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Indian Affairs Department notes that current Navajo Nation veterans' data reveals conflicting numbers as regard the actual number of Navajo veterans. According to the Navajo Veterans Affairs Department there are roughly 18,000 Navajo Veterans in the State of New Mexico. On the other hand, the United States Census states there are only 7,689 veterans in the entire Navajo

Nation. The conflicting Navajo veterans' data creates significant challenges for the Navajo Nation to advocate for federal or state veterans services and funding.

Navajo Nation discussions with the federal Veterans Affairs Administration, the Veterans Health Administration ("VHA"), and the NM Department of Veterans' Services revealed an imperative need for an accurate and reliable Navajo veterans' census. Such data is necessary to identify the types of veterans' services and programs needed to assist Navajo veterans.

In discussion with Navajo veterans in the two New Mexico Navajo Agencies (Shiprock and Eastern), the most significant services identified are: 1) housing/housing improvement assistance; 2) training and employment; and 3) health care.

Without an accurate Navajo veterans' census, there will be significant challenges for the Navajo Nation, the State of New Mexico, and federal agencies to address the housing, employment, and health care needs of Navajo veterans.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Is this a continuing requirement or a one time project making the funding non-recurring?

MW/mt