

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 134

50th Legislature, 1st Session, 2011

Tracking Number: .182605.1

Short Title: Summer Civics Courses as Electives

Sponsor(s): Representatives Roberto “Bobby” Gonzales and Rick Miera

Analyst: Ally Hudson

Date: March 1, 2011 (revised)

Bill Summary:

HB 134 allows a summer civics course or program approved by the Public Education Department (PED) to be offered as an elective.

Current law requires that service learning and financial literacy be offered as electives, while also allowing pre-apprenticeship programs and media literacy to be offered as electives.

Fiscal Impact:

HB 134 does not contain an appropriation.

Substantive Issues:

The PED analysis also states, “HB 134 could have a positive effect on high school graduation rates because some students who take a summer civics course or program might need the elective credit to complete their high school graduation requirements.”

According to an analysis by the Higher Education Department , the National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Report Card data from 2006 “showed no significant change in civics scores for either 8th graders or 12th graders from 1998 to 2006.” Therefore, passage of HB 134 could have a positive impact on students’ civic education.

Finally, in a letter dated December 10, 2010 to the Legislative Education Study Committee, the Secretary of Education indicated that, “if Boys’/Girls’ State is offered as an elective, a licensed teacher would be required at the appropriate level. That person would need to be coded as the teacher of record.”

Technical Issues:

According to an analysis by PED, current rule gives districts and charter schools the right to develop and offer elective courses through local board approval, and does not require districts and charter schools to seek approval from PED. As a result, the department “finds no programmatic basis to support why a civics course would need [PED] approval compared to other electives.”

To align with current statute and rule, the PED analysis recommends the following amendment to p. 4, line 24 through p. 5, line 1 and p. 6, lines 18-19:

- A summer civics course or program ~~approved by the department~~ may be offered as an elective.

Background:

At the June 2010 interim Legislative Education Study Committee meeting, representatives from the Government Counselor and New Mexico Boys' State requested the committee's assistance in obtaining dual credit status for the Boys' State program. This testimony described the Boys' State program as a simulation in which participants form and advocate for a political platform in a structure closely modeled on the workings of city, county, and state government in New Mexico. Testimony further indicated that Eastern New Mexico University currently grants three college credit hours to participants completing the program.

Related Bills:

None as of March 1, 2011.