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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/09/11

SPONSOR Gonzales **LAST UPDATED** _____ **HB** 134

SHORT TITLE Summer Civics Courses as Electives **SB** _____

ANALYST Gudgel

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	FY12		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 134 amends the Public School Code to allow approved summer civics courses or programs to be offered as an elective course to count towards credits needed to graduate and to earn a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Fiscal impact to the Public Education Department for approving courses would be minimal.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Currently, secondary students are required to complete 23 units of coursework to graduate, and 24 units of coursework to earn a New Mexico Diploma of Excellence, 7.5 of which must be electives. Districts and charter schools are currently required to offer electives in student service learning and financial literacy, and may offer pre-apprenticeship programs and media literacy as electives. House Bill 134 would explicitly allow school districts and charter schools to offer summer civics courses and programs approved by PED for elective credit.

PED does not have a list of approved summer civics courses or programs, and under state rule, districts and charter schools do not need to seek PED approval to develop and offer elective courses if approved by the local school board. The department indicates there is no reason why a civics course would need departmental approval compared to other electives.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Public Education Department will be required to approve summer civics courses and programs for credit as elective courses, including realigning department rules.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The 2006 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) civics assessment evaluated students' understanding of the democratic institutions and ideals necessary to become informed citizens in shaping America's future. The NAEP is the largest nationally representing and continuing assessment of what American students know and can do in various subject areas. Results from the 2006 assessment show only 27 percent of twelfth graders score at proficient or above on the civics assessment.

According to the Center for Civic Education, "Education in civics and government is a central purpose of education, essential to the well being of American democracy. Civics and government, like history and geography, is an integrative and interdisciplinary subject. Civics and government should be taught explicitly and systematically to all students kindergarten through twelfth grade, whether as separate units or as readily identifiable parts of other subjects. Effective instruction in civics and government requires attention to the content of the discipline as well as the essential skills, principles, and values required for full participation in and reasoned commitment to our democratic system."

RSG/bym