F I S C A L   I M P A C T   R E P O R T

	ORIGINAL DATE 03/03/11		
SPONSOR Griego, E.	**LAST UPDATED** 03/12/11	**HB**	
SHORT TITLE School Elections with Other Elections, CA		**SJR**	16/aSRC
		ANALYST	Aledo

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY11	**FY12**	**FY13**	**3 Year Total Cost**	**Recurring or Non-Rec**	**Fund Affected**
Total			$104.0	$104.0	Nonrecurring	Election

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SJR 16 duplicates HJR 16 and relates to HJR 11

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LFC Files

Responses Received From
Public Education Department (PED)
Attorney General's Office (AGO)
Secretary of State (SOS)
Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SRC Amendment

The Senate Rules Committee Amendment to Senate Joint Resolution 16 provides that school elections be held at different times from partisan elections.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Joint Resolution 16 proposes to amend Article 7, Section 1 of the New Mexico Constitution by deleting the requirement that all school elections be held at a different time from other elections. The amendment proposed shall be submitted to public for approval or rejection at the next general election or at any special election prior to that date that may be called for that purpose.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

According to the Secretary of State's office, with the passage of any Senate Joint Resolution, in accordance with Section 1-16-4 NMSA 1978, upon receipt of the certified proposed constitutional amendment or other question from the Secretary of State, the county clerk shall include it in the proclamation to be issued and shall publish the full text of each proposed Constitutional amendment or other question in accordance with the constitution of New Mexico.

Although the county clerk includes the proposed amendments in his/her proclamation, it is the responsibility of the State to pay for the costs associated with the publication per Section 1-16-11 NMSA 1978. The approximate cost per constitutional amendment is $104,000.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The SOS does not support combining non-partisan school board elections with general elections, but would not object to combining them with other non-partisan elections such as municipal elections in order to increase voter turnout.

According to the Public Education Department, holding school board elections at the same time as general elections inherently enhances voter participation in school elections. Historically, voter turnout for school board elections has been extremely low. Consolidating these elections with other voting opportunities may provide greater citizen participation in the selection of local school board members and school public policy issues. PED provided the following example:

> One example of low voter turnout for school board elections might be helpful. As of September 20, 2007, according to the Secretary of State's Voter Registration Statistics Report, there were 96,929 registered voters in Doña Ana County. The 2007 school board election for the school districts in Doña Ana County was decided by only 1,317 voters.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Under this proposed amendment if passed, the legislature could but would not be required to enact a law requiring school board elections to be held at the same time as other elections.

The Secretary of State's office notes that the constitutional amendment in this bill does not define which election the school board election shall be held with. This creates issues regarding partisan elections, what agency will incur costs related o the elections, districts and/or precinct which do not have the same boundaries. If added to the General election ballot, there would be a minimal cost except in Bernalillo County, due to the typically considerable-sized ballot. It is estimated that there could a possible 10% addition to the cost of ballots. Ballots in Bernalillo County typically cost $1.00 per ballot. However, if not added to the General Election ballot, these costs would continue to be incurred by the individual school districts.

MCA/mew:svb