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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR J. Martinez ORIGINAL DATE 2/10/15
LAST UPDATED _____ HB 249
SHORT TITLE 16-Year-Olds Voting in School Elections SB _____
ANALYST Jorgensen

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	None	>\$100	0	>\$100	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Attorney General's Office (AGO)
Public Education Department (PED)
Secretary of State (SOS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 249 is an act permitting sixteen-year-olds to vote in school elections. HB 249 provides that sixteen-year-olds will have a special registration and will be considered qualified electors for school elections.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The SOS writes:

A significant system enhancement would be required to the current electronic voter registration system (VREMS) in order to be able to capture and track voters that would only be eligible for certain elections. VREMS does not currently have this capability. The enhancement would be needed so that the voter would appear on signature rosters for school elections but not appear on signature rosters or receive absentee ballots for municipal, county special, local option or other local elections. Additionally, the electronic voter registration interface within the MVD Tapestry system, set to go live in May, will need to have these parameters and the forms reset.

The SOS estimates the cost of these enhancements at \$100 thousand. The SOS would defer to

MVD as to the cost of any modifications to the Tapestry system. The SOS does not have these funds budgeted for FY16 and would request an amendment to include an appropriation for the costs of implementation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the AGO, permitting sixteen-year-olds to vote may violate the United States and New Mexico Constitutions. Both have age qualifications, but it is unclear whether these serve as minimum requirements or whether they function to prohibit states from discriminating on the basis of age for those over eighteen.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED notes that expanding the voter pool for school elections might address extremely low turnout for school elections; the Albuquerque Journal recently cited an estimate by the Bernalillo County Clerk that only 3-3.5 percent of eligible voters participate in the county's school elections

CJ/bb