

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current and previously issued FIRs are available on the NM Legislative Website (www.nmlegis.gov) and may also be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Lente ORIGINAL DATE 1/29/19
LAST UPDATED _____ HB 249/ec
SHORT TITLE Native American Voting Task Force SB _____
ANALYST Armstrong

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY20	FY21		
\$40.0	\$40.0	Recurring	General Fund

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

Responses Not Received From
Secretary of State (SOS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 249 (HB249) appropriates \$40 thousand from the general fund to the Secretary of State (SOS) for expenditure in FY20 and subsequent fiscal years to convene a Native American voting information task force. The bill includes an emergency clause.

HB249 requires SOS to convene a Native American voting information task force to make findings and recommendations to the SOS regarding Native American voting education and information. Task force members would be paid per diem and mileage for meeting attendance as provided for under the Per Diem and Mileage Act for no salaried public officials. The SOS would appoint the members to the taskforce as follows:

- 1) Three members of the Navajo Nation;
- 2) One member from the Taos, Picuris, Ohkay Owingeh, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Nambe, Pojoaque, or Tesuque Pueblos;
- 3) One member from the Cochiti, Kewa, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Sandia, Zia, Jemez, or Isleta Pueblos;

- 4) One member from the Acoma, Laguna, or Zuni Pueblos;
- 5) One member of the Jicarilla Apache Nation;
- 6) One member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe;
- 7) One member of the Fort Sill Apache Tribe; and
- 8) Native American who resides in an urban area.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$40 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY20 shall not revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

IAD provided the following analysis:

Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse-Oliver convened the Native American Voting Task Force (NAVTF) in October 2017. House Bill 249 provides legislative support for the NAVTF and creates an appropriation to support the task force.

The current task force has met 12 times since their first meeting in November 2017. They have established a chairperson and vice chairperson. The NAVTF has also increased their visibility throughout the nations, tribes and pueblos of New Mexico, and received the support of the All Pueblo Council of Governors.

Historically, Native American populations have faced many barriers to voting that have left a lasting legacy evidenced by lower voter turnout, ballot access, precinct development, polling locations, and early voting sites. The purpose of the NAVTF is to:

- Consult, advise and make recommendations to Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver on Native American voting issues, including increasing voter registration in Native American communities and establishing adequate early voting sites
- Increase access to the ballot
- Provide election documents in Native American languages
- Propose statutory changes on Native American voting rights issues
- Increase voter outreach and voter education in Native American communities
- Assist New Mexico's counties in complying with federal voting rights statutes
- Assist the federal government in recognizing areas of need in New Mexico's Native American communities, including in urban areas
- Streamline and reducing inconsistencies in the voting process
- Improve translation services inclusive of language diversities
- Increase dialogue between the task force, the counties, the state and tribal leadership
- Advocate to the legislature to address the digital divide and internet connectivity incorporating Native American input into future redistricting efforts
- Secure additional funding for Native American voter outreach programs.