

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website ([www.nmlegis.gov](http://www.nmlegis.gov)). Bill analyses are prepared by LESC staff for standing education committees of the New Mexico Legislature. LESC does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**54th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2020**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<u>SB99</u>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<u>Munoz</u>
<b>Tracking Number</b>	<u>.216526.1</u>	<b>Committee Referrals</b>	<u>SPAC/SEC;HEC</u>
<b>Short Title</b>	<u>Diplomas for Vietnam Veterans</u>		
<b>Analyst</b>	<u>Kennedy</u>	<b>Original Date</b>	<u>2/4/2020</u>
		<b>Last Updated</b>	<u>2/17/2020</u>

---

---

**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 99 (SB99) would create a new section of the Public School Code authorizing local school boards to issue high school diplomas to veterans of the Vietnam conflict. To be eligible for a diploma pursuant to the provisions of SB99, an applicant must have done the following: been honorably discharged from the armed forces, been scheduled to graduate from high school between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, been a resident of New Mexico and attended a high school in the locality of the current school district, and left high school before graduation to serve in the Vietnam conflict.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

SB99 does not contain an appropriation.

**SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

The Public School Code currently authorizes local school boards to issue high school diplomas in similar fashion to veterans of World War II and the Korean conflict. Sections 22-5-4.9 and 22-5-4.10 NMSA 1978 contain provisions for issuing diplomas to veterans of these conflicts identical to the provisions outlined in SB99. Several other states permit veterans of World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam conflict, and other conflicts to obtain high school diplomas.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

SB99 would require the Public Education Department (PED) to promulgate rules to carry out the provisions of the bill, including an application form to be submitted to the local school board by the Vietnam conflict veteran or a person acting on behalf of the veteran and what constitutes acceptable evidence of eligibility for a diploma.

## **OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

To be eligible for a high school diploma pursuant to SB99, a veteran of the Vietnam conflict must have been scheduled to graduate from high school between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975; it is unclear how the date February 28, 1961 was selected. Although American military advisors were present in Vietnam as early as the mid- to late-1950s, formal hostilities between the United States and Vietnam did not commence until 1964 and the first American combat personnel did not arrive in Vietnam until March 1965.

Analysis from the Department of Military Affairs suggests eligibility requirements should be limited to proof of service.

Analysis from PED notes the department would need to promulgate regulations for the implementation of SB99, including an application form to be submitted by a Vietnam conflict veteran or person acting on behalf of the veteran.

## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC Files
- Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
- Public Education Department (PED)

**NAK/tb/mc/sgs**