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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/09/21

SPONSOR Johnson LAST UPDATED _____ HB 179

SHORT TITLE Fees for Vital Records For Homeless SB _____

ANALYST Klundt

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY21	FY22	FY23		
	≥\$1.0	≥\$1.0	Recurring	Birth Certificate Revenue

(Parenthesis () Indicate Revenue Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY21	FY22	FY23	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		\$89.7	\$89.7	\$179.4	Recurring	General Fund, DOH

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 179 (HB 179) amends the Vital Records Act eliminating a \$10 fee for individuals to obtain a birth certificate from the Department of Health (DOH) Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics (BVRHS) for individuals who are homeless or chronically homeless. The bill also defines conditions for individual demonstrate homeless.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The fees for providing copies of birth certificates are a state revenue source for which DOH reports the potential negative impact on revenue as unknown, but provided a conservative estimated negative revenue impact of \$1,000 per fiscal year. In addition, the department also reported the added workloads and means to verify validity of homelessness for individuals would require two additional FTE estimated to cost \$89 thousand per year including salary and benefits. DOH did not report this cost could be absorbed by the current operating budget.

Birth and death certificate revenues are appropriated by the Legislature for operations in DOH and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD). If the revenue loss is more significant than estimated by DOH, general fund may be needed to replace the loss of revenue.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HB 179 eliminates the cost for birth certificate or for individuals who may not be able afford to pay the birth certificate fee. Birth record are often used to prove identity and citizenship for many healthcare services or low-income services, such as Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

DOH reported HB179 would require the department to verify the homelessness of an individual based on documentation from agencies and persons other than the requesting individual. This would require an additional workload DOH including the time needed for birth searches, printing birth certificates, and other vital records services.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, New Mexico Homeless Statistics, as of January 2019, estimated 3,241 experiencing homelessness on any given day, <https://www.usich.gov/homelessness-statistics/nm/>. Many of these people are dependent on low-income services such as SNAP and Medicaid, all of which require individuals to provide proof of identity and/or citizenship to receive benefits, 8.139.110.12(C)(1)(c) NMAC.

CYFD reported, “One in 10 young adults aged 18-25 years, and at least one in 30 adolescents aged 13-17 years, experience some form of homelessness unaccompanied by a parent or guardian over the course of a year (Chapin Hall’s *Voices that Count* study). Once homeless, these youth become more vulnerable to health challenges, physical harm and abuse, and to involvement in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems, which may not serve their best interests. Homeless individuals, particularly children and youth, often face significant barriers that complicate their ability to meet their basic needs and get help from the very government agencies and organizations that otherwise could help them. Having a valid government-issued form of identification is key to accessing critical supports and services for many homeless individuals, especially unaccompanied youth.

Unaccompanied minor-aged youth, particularly those experiencing homelessness, face unique challenges in obtaining an ID. Many do not have a relationship with a parent or guardian who can provide the consent or financial assistance that is sometimes necessary to obtain

identification. Because of the transiency of their lives, they also may not have access to existing documentation necessary to obtain identification. This bill allows unaccompanied youth to apply to the state registrar for a certified birth certificate without a parent or guardian's signature. The bill also allows social workers and educational professionals who work with homeless youth and children to apply for a certified birth certificate on their behalf. By easing access to obtain certified copies of their birth certificates, it will be easier for homeless youth and children to enroll in school or workforce programs, obtain a job, apply for housing or public benefits, open a bank account.

This bill uses the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homelessness, which is the same definition of homelessness that CYFD uses, and the same definition used in the New Mexico Public Schools chapter, §22-12A-14. The National Council for State Legislators points out that statutory definitions of homeless youth vary among federal agencies, states and even within states. "These differences are significant because how homeless youth are defined in statute establishes the foundation for subsequent policies and affects eligibility for programs and services." Thus, the consistency of using the McKinney-Vento definition allows our child and youth serving agencies to respond in a consistent manner."

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