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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

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|--------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| SPONSOR | <u>Lord</u> | LAST UPDATED | <u>2/26/2025</u> |
| | <u>Museum & Park Admission for Adopted</u> | ORIGINAL DATE | <u>2/26/2025</u> |
| SHORT TITLE | <u>Children</u> | BILL | |
| | | NUMBER | <u>House Bill 576</u> |
| | | ANALYST | <u>Hanika-Ortiz</u> |

REVENUE* (dollars in thousands)

| Type | FY25 | FY26 | FY27 | FY28 | FY29 | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|------|------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Fees | | Indeterminate but minimal loss | Indeterminate but minimal loss | Indeterminate but minimal loss | Indeterminate but minimal loss | Recurring | Museum, state park, and fishing revenue funds |

Parentheses () indicate revenue decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

Agency Analysis was Solicited but Not Received From

Department of Game & Fish (DGF)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 576

House Bill 576 (HB576) amends Section 32A-3A-12 NMSA 1978 (Children’s Code) to add “adopted children,” who are residents of the state, to the list of other individuals that shall be provided for free (1) admission to state-owned museums and state parks, (2) a camping pass for up to three consecutive nights of overnight access to a state park, and (3) a fishing license.

Eligibility for this benefit is demonstrated by proof of identity, residency, and status as an adopted child in accordance with rules by (1) CYFD, for free day use admission to museums, (2) EMNRD, for free day-use passes to state parks; and (3) State Game Commission, for free fishing licenses.

As used in the bill, "adopted child" would mean a person under the age of 18 who was adopted when the person was in the custody of CYFD or a person certified, licensed, or otherwise empowered by law to place a child in a home in this or any other state for the purpose of adoption. Foster children reunited with their biological family do not qualify as "adopted children."

The effective date of this bill is July 1, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

About 650 foster children exit the New Mexico care system in a year, and about 25 percent, or 162, of those children are adopted. If 10 percent of those take advantage of this benefit, revenue losses across the three agencies would be minimal. However, the benefit may encourage more adopted families to enjoy the outdoors, which would increase revenue for these programs.

As DCA explained, admission at five of DCA's eight museums is already free if under 16.

EMNRD noted that its State Parks Division already offers free day-use at state parks for all New Mexico residents from October 1 to April 30. State park day-use fees for New Mexico residents are assessed per vehicle from May 1 to September 30 at a cost of only \$5 per vehicle.

In New Mexico, children under the age of 12 do not need a license to fish New Mexico waters. For youth ages 12 to 17, a fishing license is required, and the annual fee is \$5 for New Mexico residents. Fishing season is open year-round on most waters that do not have seasonal closures.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The current statute provides free outdoor activities to children in foster care in New Mexico and their foster parents; the bill would add adopted children. As DCA explains, foster parents show an identification card issued by CYFD as proof they are entitled to the benefit. Unless CYFD provides a similar card, parents would need to carry an official document confirming the child's adoption.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The three agencies would develop rules for free day use and fishing licenses for adopted children.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

DCA comments, if it is the intent to apply the benefit to children adopted only by New Mexico residents, then the proposed definition of "adopted child" might need further clarification.

AHO/hj/hg