

LFC Requester:

Scott Sanchez

AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 REGULAR SESSION

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO

AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov and email to billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov*(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)***SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION***{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*Date Prepared: 1/26/26

Check all that apply:

Bill Number: HB144Original X Correction Amendment Substitute

Sponsor:	Catherine Cullen, Rod Montoya	Agency Name	
	& John Block	and Code	770- NMCD
Short		Number:	
Title:	Crime of Unlawful Squatting	Person Writing	A. Griego Quintana
		Phone:	505-479-2296
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION II: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: House Bill 144 creates a new crime against unlawful squatting, making it a fourth-degree felony to live on another person's property for any period of time without their knowledge or consent.

Under the bill, if a police officer cites someone for squatting, the accused can contest the citation by showing evidence to that officer's police chief they have permission to be there, like a lease agreement. The bill doesn't specify how the police chief is supposed to evaluate the evidence or what the officer is supposed to do with the citation in the event that the police chief is satisfied the accused is authorized on the property.

If someone is found guilty of a fourth-degree felony, a court can sentence them to up to 18 months in prison.

HB144 also amends the trespass statute so that if someone found guilty of squatting damages or destroys any part of the property, they are liable to pay the owner twice the damaged property's appraised value.

The bill also creates a new section of law governing how police and courts must handle disputes over squatting. Under the bill, if someone swears in writing to a police officer that someone is squatting on their property and the accused fails to respond with their own sworn statement, the police officer can force the squatter off the property. If the alleged squatter does submit their own sworn statement, the police officer is supposed to take the issue to the local district court where a bench trial will be held.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The bill would not have a fiscal impact on the Department.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

None

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

None

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

None

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None

ALTERNATIVES

None

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

None

AMENDMENTS

None