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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Lopez DATE TYPED: 2/7/03 HB _____

SHORT TITLE: Corrine Wolfe Children’s Law Center SB 215

ANALYST: L. Baca

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	\$200.0			Recurring	GF

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates HB 357

Relates to Appropriation for the University of New Mexico in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC files

Responses Received From

Department of Children, Youth and Families (CYFD)
 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
 Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 215 appropriates \$200.0 to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico from the general fund to pay for the operating expenses of the Corrine Wolfe Children’s Law Center, which operates within the Institute of Public Law at the UNM Law School.

Significant Issues

SB 215 provides the operating expenses for salaries and benefits for a director, a staff attorney and administrative support staff. In addition, the bill provides funds to support training, technical assistance, research assistance and information dissemination in the areas of child abuse and neglect, and juvenile justice. The Corrine Wolfe Children’s Law Center will also provide services

to volunteers, attorneys, and professionals who work with the child abuse/neglect and juvenile system and who are not employed by the judicial branch of government.

The need for funding for this project is described by AOC analysis, in the section quoted below:

“As of November 2002, approximately 1800 children were in the custody of the state and some 1100 abuse, neglect and/or termination of parental rights cases were pending. CYFD had 31 children’s court attorneys and 615 social workers around the state, while over 120 lawyers served as guardians ad litem for children or as counsel for parents, with half of these scattered throughout rural New Mexico. There were also 617 volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) and over 160 volunteers serving on the 33 local Citizen Review Boards around the state. These are among the people who would be served by the coordinated, multi-disciplinary approach to training that could be provided by a funded Children’s Law Center.”

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$200.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2004 shall revert to the general fund.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

This project was not included in the UNM’s Board of Regents legislative request. Consequently, it was not reviewed by the CHE.

AMENDMENTS

The CHE suggests the following language for all new recurring higher education programs and expansion of current programs (assuming that funding will continue beyond 2003-2004):

“The institution receiving the appropriation in this bill submit a program evaluation to the Legislative Finance Committee and the Commission on Higher Education by August 2005 detailing the benefits to the State of New Mexico from having implemented this program over a three period.”

LRB/njw/ls