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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-3-2006

SPONSOR Nunez LAST UPDATED _____ HJM 54

SHORT TITLE Dona Ana Court Consolidation SB _____

ANALYST Dearing

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	NFI*		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Citing a Dona Ana County Court Consolidation Committee Report, as written for the New Mexico Legislature, wherein estimates of increased costs associated with consolidation of the court system in Dona Ana County are in excess of three times current costs, House Joint Memorial 54 resolves that the 3rd Judicial District Court and the 3rd Judicial District Attorney, as well as the City of Las Cruces withdraw their support of proposed consolidation

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Enactment of House Joint Memorial 54 carries no appropriation, and as such this has no fiscal impact.

*It should be noted, that according to the "Dona Ana County Court Consolidation Committee Report", written for the New Mexico Legislature, there are stated to be extensive cost increases that would be associated with consolidation of the county court system, however these are peripheral fiscal considerations to this House Joint Resolution's enactment, as these would occur in future fiscal periods.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

In a study of the Bernalillo county metropolitan court system by the administrative office of the courts concluded that "based on current attitudes and experiences... the public and lawyers are still critical of long waits, delays, expense (in time and money) and frustration."

Newspaper articles published since 2000 suggest the Bernalillo county metropolitan court system has continued to experience problems, inferred to be due to the consolidation of that court system.

According to the administrative office of the courts' report, the Bernalillo county metropolitan court system has been plagued by administrative problems from the beginning, as evidenced by reports that case loads immediately increased by twenty-five percent.

The "Dona Ana County Court Consolidation Committee Report", written for the New Mexico legislature, the Las Cruces city council and the Dona Ana board of county commissioners estimates the cost of moving to a consolidated court system in Dona Ana county would triple costs from the current fiscal year 2005 figure of three million three hundred ninety-six thousand five hundred ten dollars (\$3,396,510) for all magistrate and municipal courts in the county to eleven million nine thousand nine hundred six dollars (\$11,009,906) for a consolidated court, while at the same time reducing the total number of judges from ten to seven.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Copies of this memorial are to be transmitted to the administrative office of the courts, the third judicial district court, the district attorney in the third judicial district and the mayor of the city of Las Cruces.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

No public support for the consolidation of the Dona Ana County Court proposal would be withdrawn.

PD/mt