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HOUSE BILL 270

**48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007**

INTRODUCED BY

Rick Miera

AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION; PROVIDING A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM  
FOR VETERANS OF THE GULF WAR.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. Section 9-22-14 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2004,  
Chapter 19, Section 14) is amended to read:

"9-22-14. STATE BENEFITS DIVISION.--The state benefits  
division shall:

- A. provide oversight of veterans' service organizations;
- B. develop or coordinate veterans' programs and outreach, including transitional living, housing, health care and economic development; and
- C. determine eligibility for, conduct or oversee state-funded veterans' services and benefits, including

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1 determining eligibility for veteran property tax exemptions,  
2 hunting and fishing licensing and motor vehicle license plate  
3 programs; managing the Vietnam and Gulf War veterans' and the  
4 children of deceased veterans' scholarship programs; and  
5 overseeing the state funeral honors and burial program and  
6 state veterans' cemeteries, monuments and museums."

7 Section 2. Section 21-21E-1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1985,  
8 Chapter 171, Section 1, as amended) is amended to read:

9 "21-21E-1. FUND CREATED--ADMINISTRATION--PURPOSE.--

10 A. There is created in the state treasury the  
11 "Vietnam and Gulf War veterans' scholarship fund". The fund  
12 shall consist of all money appropriated to the fund and any  
13 grants, gifts and bequests made to the fund. ~~[Any]~~ Earnings of  
14 the fund shall be credited to the fund. Money in the fund is  
15 appropriated to the higher education department for the purpose  
16 of carrying out the provisions of Subsection B of this section.  
17 Money in the fund ~~[that was the result of grants, gifts or~~  
18 ~~bequests]~~ shall not revert to ~~[the general]~~ any other fund at  
19 the end of any fiscal year.

20 B. The ~~[commission]~~ higher education department  
21 shall administer the fund and shall make disbursements from the  
22 fund to reimburse educational institutions under the exclusive  
23 control of the state and nonstate colleges in New Mexico for  
24 any tuition payments, required student fees and book allowances  
25 ~~[and to nonstate colleges in New Mexico an amount equal to the~~

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1 ~~highest tuition, required student fees and book allowances at a~~  
2 ~~state institution]~~ for Vietnam or Gulf War veterans who are  
3 residents of New Mexico and are undergraduate post-secondary  
4 students, including students who have already received a  
5 baccalaureate degree or post-secondary students enrolled in a  
6 program of study leading to a master's degree [~~attending~~  
7 ~~educational institutions pursuant to Article 9, Section 14 of~~  
8 ~~the constitution of New Mexico]~~ and are in compliance with the  
9 institution's satisfactory academic progress requirements;  
10 provided that a reimbursement to a nonstate college shall not  
11 exceed an amount equal to the highest tuition, required student  
12 fees and book allowances at a state institution. The  
13 [~~commission]~~ department may adopt rules [~~regulations and~~  
14 ~~procedures]~~ as necessary or appropriate to implement the  
15 provisions of [~~the act]~~ Chapter 21, Article 21E NMSA 1978. A  
16 financial aid officer may exercise professional judgment when  
17 special circumstances exist to adjust cost of attendance or  
18 expected family contribution or to modify other factors that  
19 make the program responsive to a student's special financial  
20 circumstances and for which documentation exists in the  
21 student's file within the parameters authorized for this  
22 program."

23 Section 3. Section 21-21E-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1985,  
24 Chapter 171, Section 2, as amended) is amended to read:

25 "21-21E-2. DISBURSEMENTS FROM FUND.--

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