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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Egolf ORIGINAL DATE 01/31/11  
LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HJR 11  
SHORT TITLE Hold School Elections with General Elections SB \_\_\_\_\_  
ANALYST Graeser

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY11	FY12	FY13	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
<b>Total</b>	NFI	NFI	NFI	NFI	NR	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Attorney General's Office (AGO)

Public Education Department (PED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Joint Resolution 11 (HJR 11) requires that all school elections be held at the same time as general elections. HJR 11 brings the New Mexico Constitution into conformance with Amendment XXVI of the U.S. Constitution regarding voting age.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Since this constitutional amendment would be presented to the voters at the next general election, there would be no additional costs imposed on the election process.

If the measure passes, it would save the costs in each of the 89 school districts in the state of conducting a stand alone election. These costs include election personnel, printing ballots, transporting vote counting machines, advertising and other miscellaneous expenses.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED notes: "...as this is a resolution to submit a proposed amendment to the New Mexico Constitution at the next general or special election, the proposed change could only take effect if the public votes in favor of it."

“... should the amendment be voted for in the affirmative, the resolution might be seen as the state availing itself of voter turnout in general elections to the benefit of school elections. According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics for 2006, New Mexico then had a population of approximately 1,954,599. Of that number, 84% were over 18. In 2007, there were 1,077,318 registered voters in the state. Holding school board elections at the same time as general elections inherently enhances voter participation in school elections.”

“One example of low voter turnout for school board elections might be helpful. As of September 20, 2007, according to the Secretary of State’s Voter Registration Statistics Report, there were 96,929 registered voters in Doña Ana County. The 2007 school board election for the school districts in Doña Ana County was decided by only 1,317 voters. (Source: nmpolitics.net.)”

“Also, according to a voter registration statistical report on the website of the Secretary of State, 350,547 individuals registered to vote as of November 7, 2006. (Source: <http://www.sos.state.nm.us/pdf/COUNTY117.PDF> ]; According to an Albuquerque Journal article regarding election results of APS board members who ran for school board election, approximately 12, 295 individuals voted in that election. [Source: <http://www.abqjournal.com/abqnews/abqnewseeker-mainmenu-39/10567-updated-apsnm-election-results-.html> ] Therefore, only approximately 3.7% of potential voters are voting in Albuquerque school elections.”

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

School district officials would have to coordinate their pre-election and election duties with county voting officials for the general elections.

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

The AGO notes that “regardless if this resolution fails, Amendment XXVI of the U.S. Constitution will still trump the incorrect age proposition in Article VII, Section 1.”

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

It is often held that school officials prefer to hold school bond elections outside the regular election cycle. Proponents tend to show up at the polls, while others, with only a mild complaint about higher taxes, stay home. If the bond elections were held in the same cycle as the regular election, the dominant political wind blowing in the district would decide the bond election.

This conventional wisdom does not seem to hold for school board elections. School officials might well prefer to have as many voters as possible helping to shape school district policy.

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

School districts would not have the greater participation and would not be able to save money by piggybacking on a regular election, rather than mounting a stand alone election.