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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/02/12
LAST UPDATED _____

SPONSOR Burt **HB** _____

SHORT TITLE Veteran Services Dept. Definitions **SB** 369

ANALYST Chabot

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY12	FY13	FY14		
	(\$01)		Recurring	Local Governments

(Parenthesis () Indicate Revenue Decreases)

Relates to HB 98

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Military Affairs (DMA)

Veteran Services Department (VSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 369 amends Section 9-22-3 NMSA defining a New Mexico veteran to include Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps, Air Force Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard or Air National Guard accepted for and assigned to duty for a minimum of six continuous years. It also includes United States Public Health Service commissioned officer and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric administration commissioned officer who service in the capacity of a commissioned officer while on active duty in defense of the United States. The individual must not be separated under circumstances amounting to dishonorable discharge.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This bill would expand the number of New Mexicans eligible to veteran's benefits including additional property tax exemption, and free use of state parks on veterans' day. The additional property tax exemption will impact local government's revenues due to the exemption.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The website for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) states “Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full-time service, other than active duty for training, as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, Environmental Science Services Administration or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or its predecessor, the Coast and Geodetic Survey. Generally, men and women veterans with similar service may be entitled to the same VA benefits.”

The definition of a veteran proposed by this bill will include individuals who served as National Guard and Reservists who may not qualify as “veterans” under definition of the VA because they were never called to active duty.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The form used to qualify for veterans benefits both at the national and state levels is the Department of Defense form 214 (DD214) which includes services dates, ranks, schools, and decorations. A guard or reservist not called to active duty would not be issued this form. The DMA and VSD will have to determine what documentation will be used for New Mexico veterans not considered eligible by the VA.

ALTERNATIVES

Use the federal definition of a veteran in the bill.

GAC/svb