

Legislative Committee Report

ALBUMOAA Board Meeting

03/06/20

Some good news for military members and their families is that House Bill 30, Expedited Licensure for Military Families has passed both houses and is awaiting signature by the governor. This bill when enacted will not require any fees when applying for a license in New Mexico. Departments have 60 days to issue a license. This is a change from the original bill. The amendment was made to allow for departments to complete background investigations. In addition a retiree must be a “recent retiree” defined as having been retired three years or less.

The Personal Income Tax Exemption initiative for retirees and surviving spouses was not as successful. House Bill 249 introduced by Representatives “Rudy” Martinez and Jim Strickler received a favorable hearing by the House Labor, Veterans’ and Military Affairs Committee but died in the House Taxation and Revenue Committee. Senate Bill 169 introduced by Senator Bill Burt got no traction. However, the House Minority Leader, Representative Rod Montoya, provided some good advice. In order to improve the chances for passage next year, interim committees that meet between sessions must endorse the bill. In addition to House Labor, Veterans’ and Military Affairs Committee, the initiative must be endorsed by the interim Revenue Stabilization & Tax Policy Committee. To that end, it highly encouraged that members begin contacting members on both committees now.

House Bill 192 sought \$200,000 appropriation to the Veterans’ Service Department to fund four full-time veteran services officers. The bill died in the House Appropriation and Finance Committee.

House Bill 186 sought approximately \$1.9 million to fund transportation for veterans to health care providers. No House committee heard the bill.

Senate Bill 25 sought \$300K to provide outreach and services to homeless veterans. The Senate Public Affairs Committee recommended a Do Pass, but died in Senate Finance Committee.

Relief of the double taxation standard for Social Security was summarily dismissed as being too detrimental to the revenue flow to the State of New Mexico.

In light of the largest state budget and lack of support to retirees in general and specifically military retirees, the future does not bode well for military veterans and surviving spouses in New Mexico. New Mexico is becoming less “retiree friendly” as it is already near the bottom of best states to retire. It is time to bring this fact to the attention of our state Senators and Representatives.