

## **ALBUMOAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

### **February 2023 USPHS Representative Report**

February 2, 2023

USPHS Officers who reside in New Mexico are seeking an amendment to HB 76 which passed the House Labor, Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee with unanimous bipartisan support. The bill would support retired veterans by making up to \$30,000 of their military retirement pay exempt from state income tax. HB 76 did not include the USPHS and NOAA veterans.

I was contacted by Dr. Siu Wong, retired USPHS Captain, seeking our support and information as to who to contact to pursue correcting this exclusion. Dr. Wong and I were detailed to the Indian Health Service in New Mexico many years ago.

Siu outlined the following:

1. This is a 60 day session which is the best bet. 2024 is a 30 day session and I don't think we can get the tax exemption included in a Budget year ( I think in 30 day sessions, only budget issues are considered).
2. In addition, it will be 2 years out since the original bill was passed and I think we will have more problems in 2024 if the exemption is not approved in 2023
3. The State has a surplus and they need ideas to spend their money. The timing for the tax exemption is perfect.
4. I think I can get support from Rep Charlotte Little ( D) and Rep Bill Rehm ( R). Also, I spoke to Joe Moquino who said he would help especially with the other Native American Representatives.
5. MOAA is the best/prestigious organization for us to request this change.

Siu and I worked with Joe Moquino, former Santa Fe Service Unit Director. Joe can garner support from the Pueblos, if needed, as the Indian Health Service is their primary health care provider and the majority of the staff are USPHS Officers. Also Rep Charlotte Little, Siu and I worked together as well.

I and Dr. Stacey Goldstein – Dwyer encouraged Siu to connect with LTC Walter Paul, USA (Ret), as he is our Legislative Affairs Officer.

Reported By:

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