



## Veterans & Military Families Caucus

Democratic Party of New Mexico

# HJR2

Legislative Session  
Changes, CA

Representatives Figueroa, Serrato,  
Ortez, Garratt and Sariñana



### Why VMFC supports HJR 2

New Mexico has [142,000 veterans](#), ranking us the **13th highest** in the US.

Many veterans and families statewide **depend on services and other resources** that are provided by the state.

State agencies that provide **healthcare, transportation, education, housing assistance and constituent services** play a **critical role** in our well-being and that of our families.

State legislation **provides resources to these agencies** and they require adequate funding for them to fulfill their missions.

The needs of our **aging population of veterans** are increasing and new federal benefits, like the **PACT Act**, are now available. It's even more important now for our legislators to have enough time to determine **how state agencies can best meet our needs**.

HJR 2 is an opportunity for voters in New Mexico to decide on modernizing the legislature. It proposes to align the odd and even-number year legislative sessions to **60 days**; adds **consideration of all subjects** for legislation each year, including veto overrides; requires a **halftime recess**; and allows **pending legislation to be continued** between regular legislative sessions.

These changes provide **more time in session** for our legislators to do their jobs more effectively. Currently odd-number year sessions are restricted to working on the budget and items the Executive branch puts on the "Call". These and other restrictions stymie our legislators' ability to thoroughly address the needs of New Mexicans.

The **5-day break mid-session** is an important quality of life provision to rest, spend time with family, and regroup for the second half of the session.

Being able to **carry legislation forward** from an odd-numbered year, in which it ran out of time before being voted on by the full House and Senate, to the even-numbered year is a **critical measure of efficiency**, in that they do not need to start over each year.

New Mexico has the **third shortest legislative session** in the US. Our state's budget for 2023 is \$9.4 billion - up from \$5.6 billion in 2017. This is a **68% increase in just five years**. Yet our legislators have the **same limited amount of time as they did decades ago**. They **need more time** to research, draft, discuss, amend, and vote on legislation, and to be **good stewards of our financial resources**.

These and other measures to modernize our New Mexico legislature will benefit veterans and our military families, as they will all citizens.

Source: [https://ballotpedia.org/Comparison\\_of\\_state\\_legislative\\_election\\_and\\_session\\_dates\\_2020](https://ballotpedia.org/Comparison_of_state_legislative_election_and_session_dates_2020) and <https://www.nmvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CitizenBudgetGuide-2017-update-web.pdf>

**Dorothy Seaton**

Chair, Committee for Veterans Advocacy

Phone: 512-618-3600

email: [ds8447@gmail.com](mailto:ds8447@gmail.com)

**Claudia Risner**

Chair, VMFC

Phone: 505-357-5334

email: [nmvetscaucus@gmail.com](mailto:nmvetscaucus@gmail.com)