



Veterans & Military Families Caucus

Democratic Party of New Mexico

HJR8



Legislative Salaries, CA
Representatives Rubio, Garratt,
Sariñana, Ortez and Herrera

Why VMFC supports HJR 8

New Mexico has **142,000 veterans**, which is **8.8% of our voting population**.

Only 6% of our legislators in NM are veterans. We are the **second lowest** in veteran representation in the nation, even though we have an **ample supply of potential candidates** through our 4 military bases and 2 national research laboratories.

The lack of a salary is a **formidable barrier to entry** for many veterans. Despite a continuing desire to serve, albeit in a civilian capacity, many veterans **cannot afford to run** for an unpaid legislative office in NM. A salary makes serving in the legislature affordable.

Representation matters to veterans and our families!

New Mexico is the **LAST state** in the nation that does not pay its legislators a salary.

HJR 8 proposes that **our legislators be paid a salary**. It also **creates a citizen commission** to establish, adjust, and limit salaries for our legislators, thus taking that task away from the legislature and placing it with an objective body.

A paid legislative body would eliminate the need for legislators to be **rich, resourceful, or retired with a pension**.

It would attract a **greater diversity** of candidates, with different experiences, to run for office. This includes **more military veterans**, which would improve this constituency's representation in the legislature. Our experiences are **not the same** as many and they **add a valuable voice to the conversation**.

Paying legislators would:

- ★ **enrich the field** of candidates who run for office
- ★ provide **better representation** of our diverse New Mexico communities
- ★ bring **needed perspectives**, which are currently missing, to this legislative body
- ★ widen the opportunity for discharged, *not just retired*, **veterans to serve**

There are legislators who **oppose this change**, stating they cannot in good conscience ask their constituents to be paid. In respect of their position, VMFC supports **making a salary optional** so those who wish can decline being paid.

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

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