



# Veterans & Military Families Caucus

## 2023 TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

This session offers a great opportunity to improve the lives of New Mexico Veterans and Military Families. We thank the Representatives and Senators who are sponsoring legislation that seeks to improve our wellbeing and values our service.

- ★ **Property Tax Relief** – Since 2006 NM exempts \$4,000 per veteran, which has diminished purchasing power because of inflation. Let's raise it to the 2023 level and index it to the cost of living to retain its intended value.
- ★ **Disabled Veteran Property Tax Relief** – Provide a property tax exemption to disabled veterans proportionate to their percentage of disability.
- ★ **Expansion of NM Dept of Veterans Services case workers** – Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) provide essential assistance to veterans across NM, but they are underpaid and there are not enough of them to meet the demand.
- ★ **Eliminating Veteran Homelessness and Hopelessness** – We need supportive transitional housing with wrap-around wellness services to bring veterans off the street and into a safer environment so they may become happy and productive members of society. The Veterans Integration Center (VIC) is effectively tackling this and we support funding both their new housing campus and on-going operations.
- ★ **Welcoming Military Families** – Active duty military families face many hurdles changing duty stations, including spousal employment, child care, and school enrollment. 2021 and 2022 saw an expansion of expedited reciprocity for professional licensure, but fuller implementation is needed.
- ★ **Military Family Childcare Providers** – There is a chronic shortage of childcare providers in NM, both on and off base. DOD's Military Child Care Program provides financial assistance to qualifying civilian providers to increase access to our military families. We support NM joining the growing number of states that are participating in MCCYN-PLUS.



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- ★ **Concurrent Jurisdiction for Juvenile Offenses on Military Installations** – Many states have established concurrent jurisdiction over military installations in matters relating to violations of law by juveniles. NM does not yet have a uniform policy to bring a delinquent or vulnerable military child into the state juvenile justice system, but should. Otherwise, juveniles are inappropriately tried as adults in the federal court system.
- ★ **America Serves in NM** – The Landscape Assessment is underway and the team is meeting with veterans and resource providers across the state to identify our needs. This will be the basis for them to determine how to best build a coordinated system of public, private, and non-profit organizations that will serve veterans, transitioning service-members, and their families with a "one-stop-shop" concept.
- ★ **Military to Civilian Crosswalk of Health Professions** – Transitioning military personnel with medical training can get credit for experience to speed up their time to obtain a license to continue working in the healthcare field. Washington State has this program as an incentive to veterans and to ease their chronic shortage of healthcare professionals; NM would benefit from this.
- ★ **Paid Legislature** – NM is the LAST state in the US that doesn't pay their legislators and doesn't provide them with paid staff. We support legislation that changes this so that we have a wider range of competent candidates running for legislative office; so bills can be more thoroughly researched, written, and explained in committee and on the floor; and to decrease the influence of PACs, industry, and lobbyists on our legislature.

- ★ **Advocate**
- ★ **Educate**
- ★ **Support**
- ★ **Outreach**
- ★ **Represent**



The Veterans & Military Families Caucus champions the interests of our veterans and their families and advocates to ensure the benefits they have earned in service to our nation are protected.

We look forward to working with you during the 2023 session.