



Dear Representatives Vincent, Martinez, Terrazas, Chatfield, and Jones,

The Veterans and Military Families Caucus supports your legislation **HB 240 - Veteran PTSD Program**

**Access to Behavioral Health Programs in New Mexico** is a critical issue for veterans and military families around the state. The 2023 Veterans Profile states that there were **139,347 veterans living in New Mexico as of 2021**.

Veterans represented **8.6 percent of the civilian population 18 and older** in our state.

Add to that the number of active duty military families in our state, National Guard families, and retired military and veteran family members that also need access to programs and support'

The Veterans Administration National Center for PTSD reports that **when you serve in the military, you may be exposed to different traumatic events than civilians**. The war you served in may also affect your risk because of the types of traumas that were common. **War zone deployment, training accidents and military sexual trauma (or, MST) may lead to PTSD**.

At some point in their life, **7 out of every 100 veterans (or 7%) will have PTSD**. In the general population, 6 out of every 100 adults (or 6%) will have PTSD in their lifetime. PTSD is also more common among female veterans (13 out of 100, or 13%) versus male veterans (6 out of 100, or 6%).

By doing the math you can see that **nearly 10,000 veterans in New Mexico potentially suffer from PTSD** and need programs to recover from this traumatic service-related disability.

The VMFC Caucus has supported behavioral health programming in the past few years and will continue to do so. Please **share this letter of support with your colleagues** in committees as you advance the legislation.

If you have any questions about how this legislation benefits us or how we can support your efforts in this regard, please contact us.

Respectfully,



**Dorothy Seaton**

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