



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NM Legislature Meets Public Demand by Passing Historic Ethics Commission Legislation**

Having passed unanimously through both the House and the Senate, the State Ethics Commission Act now sits on the governor's desk awaiting her signature. The establishment of the commission will mark a historic beginning for New Mexico and its citizens, and the end of a decades-long push for a commission by many of New Mexico's citizens, the business community and advocacy groups.

In November of 2018, more than three quarters of those New Mexicans who voted on the issue approved the constitutional amendment creating the independent ethics commission. "Voters had an expectation that legislators would give them what they overwhelmingly wanted – a strong, independent, transparent commission – and we believe the voters got what they demanded," affirmed New Mexico Ethics Watch executive director Kathleen Sabo.

The State Ethics Commission Act was passed in a dizzying display of political maneuvers and policy debates, and through committed bipartisan stewardship of the legislation and leadership of the bodies.

Throughout the process, Rep. Daymon Ely worked tirelessly to protect the transparency of the commission's proceedings for the public. In concert with Rep. Greg Nibert, Rep. Ely found bipartisan compromises that ensured that the legislation and the process it outlined was both fair to those under the commission's jurisdiction and stayed true to the public's demand for strength, independence and transparency.

On the Senate side, Senators Mimi Steward and Daniel Ivey-Soto undertook essential efforts to free the State Ethics Commission Act from procedural obstacles and policy differences that could have doomed the legislation and disappointed the public. Without the bipartisan cooperation and willingness to compromise of Representatives Ely and Nibert and Senators Ivey-Soto and Stewart, New Mexico would not be on the brink of becoming the 45<sup>th</sup> state to have a functioning ethics commission. With the strong and effective leadership of both Senate Majority Leader Peter Wirth and House Speaker Brian Egolf, the State Ethics Commission Act passed both the Senate and the House unanimously.

"New Mexicans and those who have worked tirelessly to establish a strong, independent, transparent ethics commission can celebrate the bipartisan efforts undertaken and the able leadership exerted to pass this historic legislation for the benefit of all," noted Former NM Supreme Court Chief Justice and NMEW Board Chair Richard Bosson.

NMEW worked closely with Rep. Ely in both fashioning and caretaking the legislation, along with advocacy groups Common Cause NM, NM First, the League of Women Voters and the NM Foundation for Open Government, as well as the NM Association of Commerce and Industry and the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce. NMEW looks forward to working to ensure that the commission functions with the strength, independence and transparency demanded by the public.

New Mexico Ethics Watch is a non-partisan organization founded in 2016 dedicated to promoting ethics and accountability in government and public life. NMEW advances its mission through research, compliance actions, policy advocacy, public education and media outreach.

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