

Common Cause New Mexico

2016 Ethics and Campaign Finance Reform Candidate Questionnaire

Name: David J. Simon

District: NM State Senate, District 10

<p>1. In addition to ruling that corporations and unions have the right to make unlimited political contributions, the 2010 <i>Citizens United</i> opinion also ruled that requiring disclosure of the sources of contributions and expenditures in political campaigns is necessary.</p> <p>Do you support bringing our state's Campaign Reporting Act up to date by requiring independent political groups to report who their donors are and how their money is spent on campaigns?</p>	Yes X	No
<p>2. It is increasingly difficult for members of the public or media to determine which individuals or groups are influencing legislative decisions that impact various aspects of our daily life here in New Mexico.</p> <p>Do you support improving the transparency of our lobbying reporting system to ensure consistency, provide for enforcement, and increase the availability of detailed reports from organizations and the individuals who are lobbying elected officials?</p>	Yes X	No
<p>3. A December 2016 poll by Common Cause New Mexico demonstrated that 85% percent of New Mexicans believe corruption is a serious or very serious problem in our state and support the creation of an independent ethics commission.</p> <p>Would you support the creation of an independent commission to oversee and investigate public officials (both in the legislature and in executive offices) and public employees in New Mexico?</p>	Yes X	No
<p>4. In New Mexico, voluntary public campaign financing is available for qualified candidates for the Public Regulation Commission, appellate judgeships, as well as some municipal races.</p> <p>Do you support expanding such a system to include races for statewide executive positions such as governor, attorney general, and secretary of state? What about State Senate or State House?</p>	Yes X	No

<p>5. In the 2016 legislative session, a bill was introduced to compel the online publication of capital outlay projects. These projects are currently undisclosed unless a list of projects is specifically requested by a legislator and approved by the legislative council to be released.</p> <p>Would you support reforming the capital outlay system so that it is not only more transparent, but also uses a merit-based process to plan and prioritize projects?</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>6. The drawing of electoral districts is not transparent and all too often, there is no public participation. The resulting districts can often serve the political interests of the people who draw them, rather than the interests of the people being represented.</p> <p>Would you support the creation of an independent commission to establish written criteria for re-drawing district boundaries and require a fair and transparent process for conducting redistricting?</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>

Please use this space below to further explain any of your answers above:

1. The impacts of *Citizens United* and the dark money that has entered politics in huge amounts are stains on our democracy. I support overturning *Citizens United* and I support campaign contribution limits. Democracy also thrives best when the public is informed and educated about who is funding campaigns and lobbying efforts.
2. We do need these kinds of changes, though reforms and new reporting measures must be workable and should aim to track and share truly significant information. I also support limits on the “revolving door” of legislators and political appointees and further limits on things such as the endless supply of free meals provided to legislators by lobbyists at the Roundhouse. Following my own service in state government, I self-imposed a waiting period before engaging in any legislative lobbying.
3. I believe that NM is one of only seven states without an ethics commission; we must exit this group. I’ll help end weak ethics practices and corruption through creation of a carefully designed commission and work for passage of other ethics laws that ensure accountability. I know what it’s like to finally get NM to pass common-sense laws that most other states have already done; as Director of NM State Parks, I led the successful effort to get the NM Legislature to pass a life jacket/boating safety law that 46 other states had already enacted in some form.
4. We need to limit the excessive role of money in politics and public financing can help do that. It also appears that the existing public financing law may need some “tweaking” to correct problems that have cropped up because of questionable interpretations and problems in implementation by the Secretary of State. Expanding the system of public financing needs to be done carefully and constitutionally; but how wonderful would it be if significant funds now going toward political races and negative advertising instead went toward pressing social and community needs in our resource-poor state.
5. The current obstacles to the public getting this information easily are unacceptable. All 112 legislators should immediately administratively approve release of their capital outlay allocation information (including allocations in previous years) and this information should be posted on-line in an easily searchable format. This requirement should be codified as part of a statute that reforms New Mexico’s dysfunctional system for funding public infrastructure. We should better prioritize statewide and concentrate more in projects that invest in economic development and critical infrastructure, create jobs, and get completed in timely fashion. Some good capital outlay reform bills have been introduced. A bi-partisan council with diverse

representation (e.g. building on the existing capital outlay committee that is comprised of legislators and agency staff, but supplemented by other citizen experts) may be one good approach. Some legislator influence, as well as some balance and equitability in spending among geographic areas of the state will nonetheless remain important.

6. Let's learn from the examples of other states that have implemented this type of approach and get it done in time for the 2021 redistricting. We can't afford to wait another decade after that to improve our system.