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Redistricting Reform, Registration of All Qualified Voters Are Among Common Cause New Mexico's 2018 Legislative Priorities

Common Cause New Mexico today announced its priorities for the short 2018 legislative session. "We're focusing on both state and federal constitutional amendments to make voter choices more meaningful through redistricting reform and to address the increasingly heavy influence of political spending," Heather Ferguson, Common Cause New Mexico Legislative Director said. Among the measures supported by the good-government group:

1. **A Constitutional Amendment for a State Redistricting Commission, House Joint Resolution 4**, sponsored by Reps. Carl Trujillo & Sarah Maestas Barnes, and in the Senate by Sens. Mark Moores & Daniel Ivey-Soto, will establish a redistricting commission that will use a fair, transparent process to evaluate new census data every 10 years and draw new district boundaries.

"Currently, the redistricting process is not transparent, and all too often, there is no public participation," said Ferguson. "The public's perception of this process is that districts are drawn to serve the political interests of those who draw them, rather than to represent the interests of their constituents."

In 2017, this measure passed two House committees.

2. **Registration of All Qualified Voters, Senate Joint Resolution 5**, sponsored by Sen. Daniel Ivey-Soto, which requires the state to "ensure that all qualified electors are registered to vote for each election, except for those who affirmatively choose not to be registered, and that the vote of a qualified elector shall not be excluded from being counted for failure of the state to provide for the qualified elector's voter registration on or before election day.

In 2017, a similar bill passed the House and one Senate committee.

3. **“Fix it America,” House Joint Memorial 10**, sponsored by Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino and Reps. Linda Trujillo & James Smith, a Memorial calling on Congress to address both the disclosure of money in politics and partisan gerrymandering. The Memorial asks Congress to amend the U.S. Constitution to address those issues. The full language of the amendment is at: www.fixitamerica.org.

4. **Restoration of Funding for the Voter Action Act:** For years, the Secretary of State’s office has been grossly underfunded, and legislators nearly each session move money from the state’s Public Election Fund to pay for elections and the general operating budget.

“This fund is intended to provide money to qualifying candidates for the PRC and statewide judicial races, and all of the funding **MUST** be restored this year given the number of races in 2018,” Ferguson said. “We must amend a budget proposal that could take more money that is earmarked by statute for the Public Election Fund to once again fund the Secretary of State’s official operating budget.”

Ferguson also said that if the Governor sends down a message allowing for consideration of lobbying reform, campaign finance disclosure, or three-day advance election administration, Common Cause New Mexico will prioritize these issues as well.

Common Cause New Mexico is a nonpartisan grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. It works to create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest; promote equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all; and to empower all people to make their voices heard as equals in the political process.

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