



March 14, 2021

Regarding: Proposed amendments to Senate Bill 15

Dear Members of the New Mexico Legislature:

We write in gratitude for your service to the people of New Mexico and to respectfully request your consideration of **four important amendments to Senate Bill 15-Redistricting Act**.

This legislation has evolved throughout the session, been merged with other bills, and has already been amended significantly. **It makes a good start toward a fair, trusted redistricting process in New Mexico** including establishing a Citizen Redistricting Committee to collect public input and draft maps of voting boundaries. **However, SB15 still lacks a few critical elements:**

- 1) Fair voting opportunities for residents of the Navajo Nation and other communities of interest by allowing split precincts in rare situations;
- 2) Limitations on the use of partisan data to draw maps, except as needed to comply with federal law or confirm a lack of partisan bias;
- 3) Limitations on the use of lawmakers' home addresses when drawing the maps, except to potentially avoid pairing incumbents; and
- 4) Requiring the Legislature to publish written evaluations of its final redistricting plans, including how they align with redistricting criteria.

These requests are sensible, align to national best practices, and they represent the priorities of the many New Mexicans who care deeply about a fair and trusted democracy. Reform supporters include the 25 members of the statewide Redistricting Task Force (convened by New Mexico First), the 27 organizations in the Fair Districts New Mexico coalition (representing about 40,000 New Mexicans), and the 300+ signatories to the "Amend SB15 Petition" posted at www.redistrictnm.org/sign-the-petition.html.

Additional information on the bill and these proposed amendments is available at RedistrictNM.org.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Respectfully,

Edward L. Chavez
Retired Chief Justice, New Mexico Supreme Court
Co-Chair, New Mexico Redistricting Task Force

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