1

2

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2004

INTRODUCED BY

John Arthur Smith

A JOINT RESOLUTION

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 6 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO TO ELIMINATE THE SELECTION AND RETENTION OF DISTRICT JUDGES AND METROPOLITAN COURT JUDGES AND PROVIDE FOR PARTISAN ELECTIONS AND VACANCIES.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. It is proposed to amend Article 6, Section 33 of the constitution of New Mexico to read:

"A. Each justice of the supreme court <u>and</u> judge of the court of appeals [district judge or metropolitan court judge] shall have been elected to that position in a partisan election prior to being eligible for a nonpartisan retention election. Thereafter, each such justice or judge shall be subject to retention or rejection on a nonpartisan ballot. Retention of the judicial office shall require at least

. 149659. 1

fifty-seven percent of the vote cast on the question of retention or rejection.

- B. Each justice of the supreme court or judge of the court of appeals shall be subject to retention or rejection in like manner at the general election every eighth year.
- [C. Each district judge shall be subject to retention or rejection in like manner at the general election every sixth year.
- D. Each metropolitan court judge shall be subject to retention or rejection in like manner at the general election every fourth year.
- E. Every justice of the supreme court, judge of the court of appeals, district judge or metropolitan court judge holding office on January 1 next following the date of the election at which this amendment is adopted shall be deemed to have fulfilled the requirements of Subsection A of this section and the justice or judge shall be eligible for retention or rejection by the electorate at the general election next preceding the end of the term of which the justice or judge was last elected prior to the adoption of this amendment.]"
- Section 2. It is proposed to amend Article 6 of the constitution of New Mexico by adding a new Section 39 to read:
- "A. Beginning with the general election in November 2006, when a district judge's current term expires, the district judge shall be subject to a partisan election at a

. 149659. 1

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

general election. A district judge shall then be subject to a partisan election every sixth year.

- Beginning with the general election in November 2006, when a metropolitan court judge's current term expires, the metropolitan court judge shall be subject to a partisan election at a general election. A metropolitan court judge shall then be subject to a partisan election every fourth year.
- C. If a vacancy occurs in the office of a district court judge or metropolitan court judge, the governor shall fill the vacancy by appointment and the appointee shall hold office until the next general election. A successor shall be chosen at the general election and shall hold office until the expiration of the original term."

It is proposed to amend Article 6 of the Section 3. constitution of New Mexico by repealing Sections 36 and 37.

The amendment proposed by this resolution Section 4. shall be submitted to the people for their approval or rejection at the next general election or at any special election prior to that date that may be called for that purpose.