

April 8, 2015

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 16

The Honorable Don L. Tripp, Speaker of the House and
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Honorable Speaker Tripp and Members of the House:

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of New Mexico, Article IV, Section 22, I hereby VETO and return HOUSE BILL 428, as amended, enacted by the Fifty-Second Legislature, First Session, 2015.

House Bill 428 would allow for a significant increase in county official salaries in Los Alamos County and potentially Bernalillo County—up to \$95,000 per year. Maximum county salaries are set in statute by the county classification. This bill completely disregards the existing statutory structure and adds a special carve-out for incorporated and urban counties. By definition, Los Alamos County is the only incorporated county, and while Bernalillo County is currently not an urban county, it is the only county in the state eligible to become one.

The caps on county salaries were already raised in 2013 as a result of legislation that I signed into law. In fact, the caps on salaries for county officers across the state were increased by 15% with the exception of Los Alamos, the only Class H County. Officer salaries in Los Alamos went from just \$1.00 to between \$4,302 and \$13,777 depending on the position. This was a significant increase for all county officers in New Mexico, especially in Los Alamos.

Signing this bill could result in an increase of more than 25% in the salary caps for the Bernalillo County treasurer, assessor, and sheriff, and an increase of over 180% in the current statutory cap on salaries for commissioners and probate judges. For Los Alamos, where salary caps are set between \$4,302 and \$13,777, the increase is unreasonable. Therefore, I cannot sign House Bill 428.

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Page 2

Respectfully yours,

Susana Martinez
Governor

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Time: _____ a.m. p.m.

Date: _____, 2015

By _____
Secretary of State

Time: _____ a.m. p.m.

Date: _____, 2015

By _____
Chief Clerk of the Senate