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SENATE MEMORIAL 83

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2016

INTRODUCED BY

Cisco McSorley

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CREATE AN INTERIM COMMITTEE TO RESEARCH THE CREATION OF A REDISTRICTING COMMISSION.

WHEREAS, redistricting is a political process meant to ensure that all people are fairly represented in government; and

WHEREAS, the United States constitution, the federal Voting Rights Act and the United States supreme court call for fair elections based on a "one person, one vote" principle; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico state legislature is responsible for redistricting congressional, state legislative, public education commission and public regulation commission districts in the state; and

WHEREAS, districts at all levels should be drawn for

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1 voters to pick their representatives and not the other way
2 around; and

3 WHEREAS, redistricting occurs once a decade, following the
4 release of the decennial census data; and

5 WHEREAS, redistricting has proved to be a contentious
6 process, which has been unresolved in the legislative process
7 and has had to be settled by the courts in 2001 and 2011; and

8 WHEREAS, court cases regarding redistricting have cost the
9 state more than nine million dollars (\$9,000,000) in the 2001
10 and the 2011 litigation cycles combined; and

11 WHEREAS, thirteen states, including Arizona, Colorado and
12 California, have commissions responsible for planning state
13 legislative districts; and

14 WHEREAS, five states have advisory commissions that advise
15 the legislatures on the appropriate location of state
16 legislative district lines; and

17 WHEREAS, five states rely on commissions to draw districts
18 in instances in which their state legislature is unable to
19 agree upon district lines; and

20 WHEREAS, the use of a redistricting commission may
21 decrease litigation and related expenses; and

22 WHEREAS, a redistricting commission may be less
23 politically divisive and may create a more trustworthy process;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
25 OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council be

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1 requested to create an interim committee to study the formation
2 of a redistricting commission; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
4 transmitted to co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative council.