



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 9, 2024

Hannah Burling

505 603-1601 [hannahburling@gmail.com](mailto:hannahburling@gmail.com)

Dick Mason

505 239-3804 [dickmasonnm@gmail.com](mailto:dickmasonnm@gmail.com)

## **Independent Redistricting Commission is boosted by endorsement of the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission**

### ***Senator Leo Jaramillo and Representative Natalie Figueroa Sponsor Legislation for the 2024 Legislative Session***

Voters should choose their legislators; legislators should not choose their voters. This is the principle for a Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) sponsored by Senator Jaramillo and Representative Figueroa. On the same day as the filing, January 5, 2024, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission endorsed the joint resolution. Leonard Gorman, Executive Director of the commission, has been a key member of the team that developed the resolution, along with community and policy advocates.

The SJR, if passed by both Legislative chambers, will put the question of creation of an Independent Redistricting Commission on the 2024 ballot, so that voters, not legislators, can decide the issue. Senator Leo Jaramillo has been a longtime supporter of an independent redistricting commission. In 2020 the Senator stated that: "I would support the creation of an independent redistricting commission... Creating a commission and applying strong map drawing rules (including protections for communities of interest and people of color as well as a ban on partisan gerrymandering), would be a big win for New Mexicans". Representative Figueroa stated, "New Mexicans have made it clear that they want and deserve an Independent Redistricting Commission. It is time to address the inherent conflict of interest when legislators draw their own districts."

The SJR incorporates input and lessons learned from the 2021 redistricting process, as well as from various community, non-profit and good government groups. It has also been shaped by feedback received when Representative Figueroa's HJR1 was heard during the 2023 session. The drafters conducted an extensive review of independent redistricting commissions in other states including two of our neighbors, Arizona and Colorado. Some of the effective features of other states were adapted to New Mexico conditions.

Major components of the 2024 SJR are:

- An independent redistricting commission separate from the legislature
- A nine member commission that will reflect the geographic & demographic diversity of New Mexico
- The commission will be composed of 3 each from the 2 largest parties by voter registration and three Declined to State (DTS) or minor party commissioners.

Multiple polls over the last 9 years have shown overwhelming public support for an independent redistricting commission. The most recent was a 2022 poll conduct by BPS Research that showed that 77% of likely voters wanted an independent redistricting commission separate from the legislature. Only 12% opposed. The survey was conducted online and allowed respondents to review background information.