

Citizens Redistricting Committee signed into law

Written by Staff Reports
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SANTA FE — The bill calling for the creation of an independent Citizens Redistricting Committee was signed into law by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham April 6.

Sponsored by Sen. Brenna McKenna, D-Corralles, Senate Bill 304 increases redistricting transparency by including Graphic Information System data of all 33 counties on the Secretary of State's website.

In addition, the bill combines many of the bi-partisan elements from the 2021 60-day Session's Senate Bill 15, co-sponsored by House Speaker Brian Egolf, D-Santa Fe, which creates the Redistricting Act and a seven-member Citizen Redistricting Committee tasked with drawing New Mexico's state House, Senate, U.S. Congressional, and Public Education Commission district maps for submission to the Legislature.

"With the signing of this legislation by the governor today (April 6), New Mexicans will finally have a constitutional, fair, and transparent redistricting process," McKenna said. "This is a big step forward from our current redistricting process and will use an independent commission and

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the best data to take into account our state's cultural and geographic diversity."

"The people of New Mexico deserve a fair, open, and constitutional redistricting process that takes into account the diversity of our great state," Egolf said. "With the governor's signature today, we now have a process that ensures inclusivity of our state's Native and communities of color, and that protects their voices in our democratic process.

"I am proud to get this vital bill done and applaud the efforts by all involved to make sure the redistricting process lives up to the ideals and values of the people of New Mexico," he concluded.

Composed of seven members, the independent Citizen Redistricting Committee will contain no more than three members affiliated with the same political party, while permitting those unaffiliated with either party to also participate as members.

The Committee will conduct statewide hearings to gather public input and create new district maps. Using Census 2020 data, the independent Citizen Redistricting Committee will propose three different maps to the New Mexico Legislature to be voted on in the 2021 Special Redistricting Session.

Senate Bill 304 also includes critical provisions that provide the Citizens Redistricting Committee flexibility in drawing new district lines equitably and accurately to include Native voices and communities at risk of underrepresentation due to known undercounting by the 2020 U.S. Census.

The bill also prohibits the executive branch from participating in the redistricting process and allows for virtual participation.