

Senate votes to appropriate funds to financially-strapped NM courts

Written by Senate Democrats
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SANTA FE – The Senate voted Jan. 25 to appropriate funding needed to prevent judicial court closures and to ensure that New Mexico court system can meet its constitutional obligations.

The appropriation contained in SB 176 helps alleviate the financial strains felt by the state's judicial system by appropriating money essential for the operation of the New Mexico Supreme Court, Second Judicial District Court, and the Twelfth Judicial District Court. Already the Second Judicial District Court, the state's largest district, has implemented abbreviated services because of the financial crisis.

"The justice system that New Mexico families rely on to keep them safe and ensure their rights are respected is failing because of inadequate funding," said Senate Judiciary Chairman Richard Martinez. "Tonight's bipartisan passage makes important strides towards ensuring that the wheels of justice can continue to turn in a way that guarantees every New Mexican is afforded the rights they are entitled to."

The vote follows State Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Daniels' call to the legislature to answer the "constitutional crisis" facing the state court system. Chief Justice Daniels applauded the Senate passage.

"The Judiciary greatly appreciates the Senate's bipartisan support in moving quickly to address the critical needs of the state courts, provide funding necessary for jury trials, and keep the doors of the Supreme Court open," said Chief Justice Daniels. "This is a good first step. We look forward to continuing to work with the House and Senate to ensure there are adequate resources for a functioning justice system in New Mexico."

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