



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2019

Contact: Kathleen Sabo, Executive Director, 505-274-2442 or [ksabo@nmethicswatch.org](mailto:ksabo@nmethicswatch.org)

### **New Mexico Ethics Watch Releases A List of Elements Necessary for a Strong Ethics Commission**

New Mexico Ethics Watch (NMEW), a nonprofit dedicated to promoting ethics in governance and public life, today releases its *Essential Elements for an Independent Ethics Commission*. The document highlights and explains the following nine elements necessary for a strong, effective, nonpartisan ethics commission: Independence; Jurisdiction; Transparency; Open Meetings; Funding; Evidence Standard; Subpoena Power; Enforcement; and Commission Quorum.

In November of 2018, three quarters of those New Mexicans who voted on the issue approved the constitutional amendment creating the independent ethics commission. "The strong support for an ethics commission shown by New Mexico voters demonstrates that they expect results – from the legislature charged with crafting the commission's enabling legislation as well as from the commission in preventing, investigating and punishing corruption by public officials," noted NMEW executive director Kathleen Sabo

NMEW participated, in the recent interim, in the Ethics Commission Working Group, chaired by State Senator Linda Lopez and former State Representative Jim Dines. The working group crafted a draft ethics commission enabling legislation bill. While many in attendance at the meetings were in agreement about most of the provisions contained in the draft bill, strong and differing opinions on issues such as transparency and jurisdiction kept the group from achieving consensus on a complete bill.

NMEW's *Essential Elements for an Independent Ethics Commission*, with its emphasis on transparency, fairness, independence and strength, will provide guidance to both legislators and the public during the legislative session, as ethics commission enabling legislation moves through the House and Senate, to the governor's desk, and into law.

"New Mexico needs ethics commission legislation that will increase the trust in those working for the public and seeking public office and state contracts," said Former NM Supreme Court Chief Justice and NMEW Board Chair Richard Bosson. "In the interest of fairness and accountability to New Mexico's citizens, legislators can do their part to empower a strong ethics commission by including in enabling legislation the essential elements set out by NMEW," counseled Bosson.

New Mexico Ethics Watch is a non-partisan organization founded in 2016 dedicated to promoting ethics and accountability in government and public life. NMEW advances its mission through research, compliance actions, policy advocacy, public education and media outreach.

NMEW's *Essential Elements for an Effective Ethics Commission* can be accessed at <http://nmethicswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NMEW-ESSENTIAL-ELEMENTS-FOR-AN-INDEPENDENT-ETHICS-COMMISSION.pdf>

...

Please subscribe to NMEW's social media pages for news and breaking alerts:

Facebook: @NMEthicsWatch      Twitter: @NMEthicsWatch