

January 22, 1998

Senator Linda M. Lopez
State Capitol
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Senator Lopez:

You asked the interim legislative ethics committee for an advisory opinion setting an appropriate standard of conduct for the use of official legislative business cards by former legislators. The committee is not issuing an opinion and, pursuant to legislative council policy number 16 (A) (3), is issuing this letter explaining why no opinion will be issued.

The committee met on August 4, 1997, September 19, 1997 and January 19, 1998 to discuss your request. The committee recognizes that it is not uncommon for members of the public to address former officeholders by their former title. However, the committee believes it is inappropriate for former legislators to present themselves as sitting legislators. Introducing oneself by title and distributing official legislative business cards or other written material that indicates a former member is a current member is confusing to the public and discourteous toward sitting legislators.

The committee has no jurisdiction over former legislators pursuant to statute and therefore does not believe it would be useful to issue a formal opinion on the question.

In keeping with legislative council policy, a copy of this letter shall be mailed to all legislators and kept on file in the library of the legislative council service.

Sincerely,

PHILLIP J. MALOOF
Co-chairman, Interim Legislative
Ethics Committee

R. DAVID PEDERSON
Co-chairman, Interim Legislative
Ethics Committee

PJM/RDP:ar