

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 12

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019

INTRODUCED BY

Christine Chandler

Pursuant to House Rule 24-1, this document incorporates amendments that have been adopted prior to consideration of this measure by the House. It is a tool to show the amendments in context and is not to be used for the purpose of amendments.

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF ALL-MAIL ELECTIONS FOR NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, since its founding, the United States has been guided by the democratic principle of a government of the people, by the people and for the people; and

WHEREAS, the United States is a representative democracy where not only does every vote count, but every vote matters; and

WHEREAS, the fundamental right to vote is the ability to

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hold elected representatives accountable; and

WHEREAS, yet only about fifty-eight percent of eligible Americans voted in the 2016 presidential election, according to the United States election project; and

WHEREAS, local governments looking for ways to increase voter participation are considering changes such as conducting elections by mail; and

WHEREAS, at least twenty-two states have provisions allowing certain elections to be conducted entirely by mail; and

WHEREAS, as of January 2017, three of those twenty-two states – Oregon, Washington and Colorado – held all elections entirely by mail; and

WHEREAS, other states permit all-mail elections in certain circumstances, such as for special districts, municipal elections or when candidates are unopposed; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico requires local governments to hold all special elections for bonds or other tax proposals by mail; and

WHEREAS, a study published in 2017 by the United States election assistance commission found that voting by mail increased turnout in local special elections by an average of seven and six-tenths percent; and

WHEREAS, getting off of work when polls are open or getting to a polling place for people living in very rural areas of New Mexico are barriers to voting that can be remedied

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by all-mail elections; and

WHEREAS, possible advantages of all-mail elections include voter convenience and satisfaction, financial savings, increased turnout and improvement of election reliability; and

WHEREAS, possible drawbacks of all-mail elections include lost ballots, heightened concerns about voter fraud, loss of the level of voter confidence inherent in polling place voting and reliance on the United States postal service; and

WHEREAS, voters must believe that the process is transparent, accessible and accurate for all-mail elections to be successful; and

WHEREAS, a study of the costs and benefits of all-mail elections would provide valuable information about possible direct cost savings, voter participation, the possibility of voter fraud and cost savings from eliminating staff at polling places on election days; and

WHEREAS, the effects of all-mail elections on New Mexico's Native American population would need to be considered;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of state be requested to study the feasibility of all-mail elections for New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a cost-benefit analysis be made to consider the pros and cons of holding all-mail elections; and

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consult with Indian nations, tribes and pueblos; county clerks; New Mexico counties; the New Mexico municipal league; and other relevant stakeholders; and←HSEIC

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that states that have successfully implemented all-mail elections be studied as possible models for implementation in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that effects of all-mail elections on New Mexico's Native American population be addressed in the study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of state be requested to report findings and recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committee by December 1, 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of state.