



**NEW MEXICO
BUSINESS COALITION**

PO Box 95735
Albuquerque, NM 87199
(505) 836-4223 FAX (505) 836-4522
www.nmbizcoalition.org

RE: Oppose SB 8 Voters' Rights Provisions – NMBC Opposes

Mr./Madame Chair and Committee Members:

The New Mexico Business Coalition (NMBC) represents hundreds of businesses and thousands of New Mexicans. Our focus is to make New Mexico a better place to live and work, where we have an abundance of good-paying jobs to provide for our families.

NMBC respectfully opposes SB 8 Voters' Rights Provisions. Our voting rights are among the most precious rights we have to assure election of leaders who best represent us in government. SB 8 will endanger those rights in the following ways:

Section 3 Allows 16 and 17-year-olds to vote in local, special, and municipal elections. Most children are not able to make critical decisions and the election of government officials is one of the most critical decisions that adults make. There is a reason that in most states, it is the age of 18 years that minors are considered adults. It is a challenge for mature adults to make important decisions on who to elect to govern. Expecting children still in school to make informed voting decisions isn't realistic or desirable. NMBC urges you to leave our statute for voting at the age of 18 years.

Section 7 allows the SOS to provide lists of eligible unregistered voters to third parties by request. This violates an individual's right to privacy and exposes their personal information to increased risk of hacking and other cyber data breaches. There is nothing in the legislation requiring third party vendors to have adequate internal and external security measures in place. Further, it poses certain risks to the integrity of our election system to allow third parties to access this information. There are other provisions in the bill that allow third parties to interface with the online voter registration system. This, again, violates voters' rights to confidentiality of their personal information. In addition, it would increase the opportunities for hacking and other technical issues when you have untrained people gaining access to a critical system.

Section 12 allows the voting rights of felons to be restored automatically upon release from incarceration. Current law requires the completion of Parole, Probation, and application to restore rights and that is eliminated in this bill. While we believe that everyone deserves a second chance, we feel strongly that the person must first complete all requirements of them related to the crime they committed. The reality is that some people violate conditions of parole/probation when released and are subsequently returned to incarceration. The logistics between the Corrections Department and the Secretary of State for tracking who is and is not eligible to vote would easily lead to mistakes that do not enhance election integrity.

Section 13 would allow state agencies, such as the DMV, to register voters to vote without their consent. New voters would then receive notice allowing them to opt out of the voter registration or, if not already designated, select a political party. This is the

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opposite of what we should be doing with voter registrations. The system for registering voters should focus on those individuals who willing and knowingly desire to register.

Section 16 Permanent Absentee Voter list. There are several provisions in this section that include removing someone from the Absentee Voter list if mail is returned marked undeliverable. It is, however, not equitable to have this be a permanent option to vote absentee. There was a time when the option of absentee voting filled a necessary need for those who were unable to get to the polls. This bill would make absentee voting a permanent option. Since the USPS is so unreliable, there is always the issue of whether a ballot will be returned in time. It is not a preferable way to vote, except for those who cannot otherwise go to the polls.

On behalf of hard-working New Mexicans and businesses, and for the reasons stated, we urge you to say 'NO' to SB 8 Voters Rights' Provisions.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonntag". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Carla J. Sonntag
President

Comments