



SB 8 Voters' Rights Provisions

Summary: SB 8 intends to increase voter participation and access to the polls by extending voters' rights in New Mexico. SB 8 would make Election Day a state holiday; allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in local and municipal elections; provide for secure electronic signature of nominating petitions; allow tribal government buildings to qualify as an elector's mailing address; provide automatic voter registration; expand online voter registration opportunities; allow inmates to vote upon release; create a permanent absentee voter list; enact the Native American Voting Rights Act to protect polling place access and address other issues on Indian nation, tribal, and pueblo land; require a presidential elector to resign if the elector votes against the elector's party; and more.

Why SB 8 Is Good For New Mexico

With voting rights under attack in multiple states across the U.S. under a wave of anti-democratic sentiment fueling restrictive and discriminatory ballot access policies, this legislation would expand, secure, and support voter rights in our own state.

A recent report from the UNM Dept. of Political Science shows that New Mexico had its largest voter turnout in recent history during the 2020 General Election. But with a turnout of 69.7% of registered voters and 61.3% of eligible voters, there is room for improvement.

Increased voter access, expanded eligibility, reduced bureaucracy and other provisions in SB 8 would significantly increase voter participation and allow more New Mexico voices to be heard and represented at all levels of government, giving the people more power in policymaking and legislation, and strengthening democracy across the state.

The Secretary of State (SOS) notes that SB 8 would:

- Reduce the bureaucracy surrounding voter registration and voting that may inhibit or prevent electors from voting without compromising security and administration practices.
- Allow voters to use the online voter registration system if they do not have a state ID.
- Simplify the administrative burden on SOS to register convicted felons when they are released from incarceration. The current cumbersome process has led to individuals who are eligible to vote to be denied their right.
- Make voting by mail easier by implementing a permanent absentee voter list so that voters will not be required to apply for an absentee ballot for every election. One will be mailed automatically, also reducing administrative burden on county clerks.
- Reduce the number of candidate challenges prior to the primary election by implementing a system for candidates to collect electronic signatures on nominating petitions.
- Require the SOS and MVD to upgrade the current MVD voter registration system to comply with the improvements proposed in the bill.

Building grassroots power to successfully advocate for social, racial, environmental, and economic justice.

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