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## STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### **Low National Ranking on Lobbyist Disclosure and High Lobbyist Spending Drive Push for Transparency with SB 248**

*Santa Fe, NM, February 22, 2025* – Senate Bill 248 updates the Lobbyist Regulation Act to improve public access to information on the activities of the hundreds of lobbyists working in the legislature each session. The bill addresses a longstanding issue that has placed New Mexico among the lowest-ranked states for lobbyist disclosure.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Harold Pope and Sen. Natalie Figueroa, will be heard in the Senate Rules Committee on Monday, February 24th at 8:30 AM. The Rules Committee meets in Room 321 of the Capitol.

SB 248 “Lobbyist Regulation and Expenditure Reports” is a bill that would require lobbyists to disclose how much they are spending and who gets—and actually gives—the money. It would also require lobbyists to disclose the specific bills they are working on and their position on the legislation—an effort that aligns with HB 143, sponsored by Rep. Sarah Silva and Sen. Jeff Steinborn, which also focuses on increasing transparency around legislation-specific lobbying activities.

“While lobbyists must already disclose some general information, these required disclosures are undemanding and put the public in the dark about the real influence of lobbyists and their clients,” says Jeremy Farris, executive director of the New Mexico State Ethics Commission, which is supporting the bill.

New Mexico is in the bottom tier of states when it comes to lobbyist reporting requirements according to the 2022 Open Secrets lobbyist disclosure report card.<sup>1</sup> New Mexico ranks 41st compared to neighboring Colorado, which ranked 3rd, and Texas, which ranked 8th.

New Mexico's low national ranking comes even as the amount of spending on lobbying activities has increased. Last year, from January 1 to March 30, 2024, a period encompassing the last 30-day regular session of the Legislature, lobbyists spent \$293,608 on meals, beverages, advertising, emails, gifts, awards, and supplies for legislators and their staff.

SB 248 is modeled after successful measures in states like Colorado and Washington, which ensure more consistent and transparent reporting without imposing significant burdens. "This bill is an incremental, common-sense measure to enhance transparency in and around the Roundhouse and the public's trust in the legislative process," says Farris.

For additional information, see: (1) [Policy Brief: Amendments to the Lobbyist Regulation Act](#); (2) [SB 248: Lobbyist Regulation and Expenditure Reports](#)

### **About the State Ethics Commission**

The State Ethics Commission is an independent, constitutional state agency with the authority to enforce civil violations of New Mexico's governmental ethics and disclosure statutes, including the Lobbyist Regulation Act. The Commission is comprised of three Democratic Commissioners, three Republican Commissioners, and one independent Commissioner who is registered as "decline to state."

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For more information about the State Ethics Commission, visit [www.sec.nm.gov](http://www.sec.nm.gov).

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<sup>1</sup> See OpenSecrets, State Lobbying Disclosure: A Scorecard (June 28, 2022) available at <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/reports/layers-of-lobbying/lobbying-scorecard> (showing New Mexico is in the bottom quintile across the 50 states with respect to disclosure requirements related to lobbying).