



## **BETTER TOGETHER** NEW MEXICO

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Nonprofit announces referendum process for five bills signed by the governor; Secretary of State stands in the way.

New Mexico (April 13, 2023) – Better Together New Mexico today announced the people of New Mexico have begun the referendum process on five bills passed by the legislature and signed by the governor. Once approved by the Secretary of State, there will be a massive effort to gather the appropriate number of signatures to allow the people of the state to vote on these issues in the 2024 election.

Some of the groups involved include Change Course New Mexico, The Library Guild, NMET Network, Right to Life, and One Name One Banner, among others.

If 25 percent of those who voted in the last general election sign the petition within 90 days of the session's closing date, the law will be stopped from taking effect until there is a vote in 2024. If this number of signatures is not obtained within the given time frame, those gathering signatures will have until four months prior to the 2024 election to gather signatures from 10 percent of those who voted in the last general election to have the issue put on the ballot, but the law goes into effect until that time.

The various organizations working on this initiative have been repeatedly hindered by the Secretary of State (SOS) for approval of the referendum petitions. Maggie Toulouse Oliver has put up unnecessary roadblocks denying the petitions for the lack of semi-colons, hyphens, or other insignificant reasons that can easily be remedied. The bottom line is that the SOS seems to be purposely hindering the rights of New Mexicans to vote on this matter rather than rely on well under 100 elected officials to make the decisions for them.

Larry 'Lead' Marker said, "Since the Secretary of State has taken office, she has exceeded her authority and has illegally stopped over 50 bills from being put up for referendum. She has continually violated New Mexicans enumerated constitutional right to refer egregious laws to the ballot. With the help of the grassroots movement, this ENDS NOW."

Ramona Goolsby of the Library Guild said, "If the New Mexico Secretary of State cared about preserving the people's rights, she would be helping and not hindering this process. The New Mexico Constitution Art. IV Sec. 1 "...reserves the power (of New Mexicans) to disapprove, suspend and annul any law enacted by the legislature," ... with some exceptions."

The five bills being challenged to allow New Mexicans to vote encompass two topics that focus on: 1) whether a parent should have the right to be involved in major life-changing decisions of their child; (stripping Parents of the Right to be involved in, or even made aware of, major life changing decisions for their children, such as gender transition or abortion and 2) how elections will be conducted in our state (drastic and dangerous changes to NM election law).

All participants in this effort strongly believe in parents' rights to be involved in the lives of their children. They reject the thought that because their child is in public school, they have given up their rights to be informed and involved in their child's life. They also believe in fair, open, and transparent election processes and disagree with those laws that will hinder a person's right to vote in elections where they can feel confident of secure procedures.

These groups are collectively calling for the SOS to do her job and stop interfering with the constitutional right which allows people the right to vote on these issues. The laws signed by the governor and being challenged in the referendum process include:

HB 7 Reproductive and Gender-Affirming Health Care

SB 397 School-Based Health Centers

SB 13 Reproductive Health Provider Protections

HB 4 Voting Rights Protections

SB 180 Election Changes

There were over 440,000 actions taken (emails and phone calls) in opposition to those bills listed above. New Mexicans are obviously passionate about parental rights and secure elections. It's time to allow New Mexicans the right to vote directly on whether or not these bills remain as laws or if they are repealed.

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Better Together New Mexico is a statewide nonpartisan alliance of people seeking a better path forward for our state. For more information, please visit our website at [www.bettertogethernewmexico.org](http://www.bettertogethernewmexico.org).