

Update on the effort to objectify the redistricting process in New Mexico

Written by By Mike Daly Guest Columnist
Friday, 19 March 2021 04:17



Recently, I talked about the effort by a bi-partisan commission to reform the lopsided political redistricting process in New Mexico, which is mandated every ten years after the national census. The short version is that the effort to mandate non-partisan redistricting has failed. The bill recommended by the Redistricting Task Force in New Mexico was effectively killed when Democratic House Speaker Brian Egolf in a Zoom Meeting bashed the plan, saying it would undermine progressive priorities. Simply stated the Democrats hold the power in the legislature and they don't intend to relinquish a bit of it.

The Democratic Party alternative, Senate Bill 15, removes the teeth contained in the Task Force recommendations. While the public at large is the big loser here, especially hard hit are Tribes and Pueblos that are often partitioned without regard to local political divisions.

Forever hopeful, the Task Force sponsor, New Mexico First, is asking to strengthen SB 15 by:

Ensuring a clear and empowered role for New Mexico's 23 sovereign Tribes and Pueblos and other communities disproportionately impacted by Voting Rights Act issues throughout New Mexico's history.

Making sure limitations in census data are acknowledged and the significant undercount of Tribes/Pueblos, rural, and frontier communities are addressed through the use of other credible data sources to enhance census data.

Creating prohibitions against protecting incumbents and partisan gerrymandering as included in two other redistricting bills, [SB 199](#) and [HB 211](#) ;

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Requiring the legislature to document and justify amendments to redistricting maps.

We can be hopeful, but a strong reform effort is probably doomed at this point.

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