

Duran's preliminary hearing set for December

Written by By Andy Lyman NM Political Report
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SANTA FE— New Mexico Secretary of State Dianna Duran's attorney was granted some extra time in the criminal case against her client on Oct. 8.

First Judicial District Court Judge Glenn Ellington granted an extension for Duran's attorney Erlinda Johnson after she asked the court for another 60 days to comb through documents related to the case.

Johnson has not yet responded to New Mexico Political Report's requests for comment. A spokesman for the Attorney General said the office would not be releasing a statement regarding the extension, but did say the office would proceed with business as usual.

Spokesman James Hallinan told the New Mexico Political Report, "the Office of the Attorney General remains focused on preparing for the preliminary hearing."

The criminal case has been in and out of the courtroom with each side pointing fingers back and forth.

In August, New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas filed 64 criminal charges against Duran accusing her of illegally using campaign money. The charges included money laundering, fraud and skimming money from her campaign and using it at casinos in New Mexico.

Since then, the Attorney General charged Duran with an additional count of identity theft against

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a former state Senate colleague.

Balderas' office later announced they would not be providing legal assistance to Duran's office due to the pending criminal matter. Duran's office fired back saying Balderas had a personal score to settle with Duran and that he should not be associated with the case.

The same day the AG's office filed a response claiming Duran's attorney was "prosecutor shopping." They also filed additional charges alleging Duran fraudulently named a former state senator, as her campaign's treasurer.

NMPolitics.net reported that Johnson has a history of filing motions that ultimately drag court proceedings out.

Meanwhile, a legislative panel was formed to look into the possibility of impeaching Duran.

There is still a hearing scheduled for October 23 to hear motions filed by each side, but the preliminary hearing is now scheduled for December 1.

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