

Sanchez vows drivers license repeal won't happen

Written by By Matthew Reichach NM Political Report
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Sequels are rarely as good as the original and this one has been going on for years now.

Since Gov. Susana Martinez took office, the House has passed legislation that would repeal the law that allows those who are in the country illegally to get drivers licenses. Then, it goes to the Senate where it fails to make it through the committee process.

This is a well-worn script, one that has held for years with the slightest of alterations.

Senate Majority Leader Michael Sanchez says it will be the same thing in this coming legislative session, according to the Associated Press.

Those who support the repeal say that the law is a magnet for criminal activity and point to convictions for rings that bring in foreign nationals to the state as evidence.

Supporters say that it makes the roads safer, since it allows everyone to be licensed and have auto insurance, saying that repealing would make it illegal for those who are here to drive their children to school or to get to work.

The back-and-forth and fight over the legislation has been typical of the relationship between Democrats in the Legislature and Martinez. She has called for an outright repeal and rejected any attempts at compromise.

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Democrats, meanwhile, have done all they can to stop an outright repeal from going to the floor of the Senate.

The Senate does have a slightly different configuration now; after the resignation of Sen. Phil Griego after an ethics scandal, Martinez replaced him with former Estancia mayor Ted Barela. Griego was a Democrat and Barela is a Republican.

There could, of course, be a change to the script. In this year's legislative session, the Senate tried to do just that with a compromise bill that would have a two-tier licensing system. That legislation passed the Senate on the eve of *sine die*, or the end of the session, and never received a hearing in the House.