

A look at Gov. Martinez's vetoes

Written by By Andy Lyman and Joey Peters NM Political Report
Friday, 17 March 2017 07:58

Gov. Susana Martinez is getting attention, to say the least, for her onslaught of vetoes as the legislative session nears a potentially messy end.

But the tension between Martinez and state lawmakers started with her early veto of the bill to fund the operations of the Legislature during the session and the interim. It continued towards the end of January, when she vetoed a much-publicized bill to allow for industrial research of hemp.

February came and went with no bills headed to Martinez's desk. But at the end of the first week of March, she rejected a measure to allow teachers to use all of their allotted sick days without absences making a negative impact on their statewide evaluation. Though the teacher evaluation has been one of Martinez's biggest and most controversial policies, the bill was sponsored by some of her fellow Republicans. The bill originally passed the Senate unanimously and the House with only three no votes.

The Senate voted to override her veto, the first time such an action happened in her administration. From there, she unleashed the veto pen, knocking down six bills in one day.

There has been a lot of speculation about why Martinez vetoed many as bills as she without adding explanations to her executive messages. Martinez added explanations to all of her veto messages during the legislative session for at least the past two years. Legislative staffers familiar with both the Gary Johnson and Bill Richardson administrations said both previous governors made a point to explain why they vetoed legislation.

Pocket vetoes, which happen after the session, do not come with messages.

Spokesmen for Martinez did not respond to an email inquiry regarding a lack of veto explanations. Martinez issued a statement to KOAT-TV criticizing the Senate for spending too much time on passing what she called "meaningless bills." She also implied that her vetoes were a direct result of her frustration with the Senate.

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“That’s disappointing and that failure of the Senate to live up to its constitutional duties, including passing a balanced budget, has led to many vetoes,” Martinez told KOAT-TV.

Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino said he and his colleagues are at a loss for why Martinez vetoed the handful of bills without any stated reason.

“I have no idea,” Ortiz y Pino told *NM Political Report*. “She’s been mad at us since day one.”

Ortiz y Pino, who is also a member of the Senate Rules Committee, said Martinez first became frustrated when the Rules Committee, she felt, was not confirming her appointments fast enough. Things got worse, Ortiz y Pino said, when the Senate voted, almost unanimously, to override a veto.

“It’s pretty clearly, ‘I’ll tech you guys a lesson,’” Ortiz y Pino said.

Below is a list of legislation that has been vetoed by Martinez. We will update the list with any more vetoes as they come in.

January 27

Senate Bill 176

Making a General Appropriation to the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches

Sponsored by Sen. John Arthur Smith, D-Deming and Senate Minority Leader Stuart Ingle, R-Portales

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House Bill 144

Industrial Hemp Research Rules

Sponsored by Rep. Bill Gomez, D-La Mesa

March 14

Senate Bill 67

Notification of TIDD to County Treasurers

Sponsored by Sen. Nancy Rodriguez, D-Santa Fe

To view more of Gov. Martinez's vetoes, visit: nmpoliticalreport.com

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