

Bill would require tax returns from presidential candidates

Written by By Matthew Reichbach NM Political Report
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A state senator wants to require presidential candidates to release five years of tax returns to qualify for New Mexico's ballot.

State Sen. Jacob Candelaria, D-Albuquerque, announced the legislation Wednesday, and it comes after President-elect Donald Trump refused to release his tax returns, breaking a decades-long tradition among major party presidential candidates.

"This past presidential election proved that time honored traditions and political norms are no longer enough to ensure that presidential candidates meet the basic threshold of transparency they owe to the public by releasing their tax returns," Candelaria said in a statement. "New Mexico voters deserve to know if any potential conflicts of interest or financial improprieties may exist. It's unbelievable that President-elect Donald Trump failed to provide the public with the most basic financial information disclosed by every major party nominee in the last 40 years."

Democrats have said without releasing his tax returns it is impossible to see what potential conflicts of interest Trump may have with foreign governments.

Candelaria has the support of UNM School of Law professor Mary Leto Pareja.

"States have a critical interest in ensuring this basic level of transparency. Tax returns have the potential to reveal foreign entanglements and other conflicts of interest that could impair a candidate's ability to act in the best interest of the American people," Pareja said. "Tax returns also can shed light on a candidate's approach toward tax compliance – whether he or she is concerned more with scrupulous compliance or with skirting the rules."

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New Mexico isn't the only state that will consider such legislation.

The *Washington Post* reported that Democrats in Maryland, New York, Massachusetts, California and Maine have introduced such legislation.

New York and California have Democratic governors, while the other states, like New Mexico, have Republican governors and Democratic-majority legislatures.

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