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Toulouse Oliver Calls for Full Funding for Secretary of State's Office

SANTA FE – Today, Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver testified before the House Appropriations and Finance Committee (HAFC) calling on the State legislature to adequately fund the programs of her office. Secretary Toulouse Oliver's request includes \$1.581 million to successfully conduct the primary election in June 2018, restoring \$1.39 million for publicly financed candidates for the Public Regulation Commission and New Mexico's statewide judicial seats, and a full recurring base budget for fiscal year 2019 that will allow the Office to run at its full potential and successfully serve all constituents.

"This office has managed to meet its statutory requirements and achieve its performance measures despite being chronically under-funded, but we want do more than meet the minimum requirements," said Secretary Toulouse Oliver. "I greatly appreciate Chairwoman Lundstrom's leadership and the willingness of the committee members to continue working on the budget for my office."

The request for \$1.581 million is intended to correct a shortfall in the Office's Election Program. The money will be used to fund the ballot-on-demand system that is used at every voting site across the state, which includes on-the-ground Election Day technical support, system licensing, and hardware and software improvements for network security.

Secretary Toulouse Oliver specifically requested that HAFC return \$1.39 million to the Public Election Fund (PEF) that had be appropriated during the past two fiscal years to supplement operating costs for the Office. There are currently eight races eligible for public financing, and fifteen candidates have expressed an intent to use public funds to run in 2018. If the funding is not restored to the PEF, the Office estimates that the fifteen candidates would only be disbursed forty-two (42) percent of what their calculated disbursement would otherwise be.

Further, Secretary Toulouse Oliver requested a full recurring baseline budget of \$11.4 million for fiscal year 2019. The Office serves hundreds of thousands of constituents from voters to small business owners, and is highly dependent on existing and emerging technologies that increase security and provide swift and efficient services to constituents.

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