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SOS Toulouse Oliver Announces Straight-Party Voting Option for 2018 General Election Ballot

SANTA FE – Today, New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver announced that she is formatting the 2018 general election ballot to once again include the option for “straight-party” voting. The straight-party option had long been a fixture on general election ballots until 2012 when then-Secretary of State Dianna Duran chose to no longer provide the option.

“Like absentee voting and early voting, straight-party voting gives New Mexicans another option for casting their ballot. Voters can choose to use straight-party voting, if they decide it will work best for them. They can also choose to fill out the ballot for each individual race,” said Secretary Toulouse Oliver. “The more options people have, the easier it is for more eligible voters to participate--and participation is the key to our democratic process.”

The straight-party option allows a voter to cast a single vote for all partisan candidates of one party (known as a ticket or slate) simply by marking the oval next to that major party’s name at the top of the ballot. Voters can do this and still choose candidates of different political parties in any individual partisan race. Straight-party simply gives voters a choice of how to cast their vote.

Voters can also ignore the straight-party option altogether and fill in the oval next to every candidate they support. Questions that are non-partisan in nature – starting from the retention of judges down through any constitutional or ballot questions –will always require that the voter fill in an oval for each individual race or question.

“As Secretary of State, I am committed to making it easier—not harder—for New Mexicans to vote,” said Secretary Toulouse Oliver. “From moms juggling work and kids to elderly veterans who find it hard to stand for long, straight-party voting provides an option for voters that allows their voices to be heard while cutting in half the time it takes them to cast their ballot.”

New Mexico law gives the Secretary of State the explicit authority to decide the format of the paper ballots used in our elections. Specifically, state law provides that ballots will be “in the form prescribed by the secretary of state.” (NMSA 1978, Section 1-10-12)

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