

# ***New Mexico Senate Democrats***

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Contact: Angie Poss

(505) 720-5128

[Angie.Poss@nmlegis.gov](mailto:Angie.Poss@nmlegis.gov)

[www.nmsenate.com](http://www.nmsenate.com)

## **Senate Rules Committee Approves Straight Party Voting Ballots**

From 1960 to 2010, voters in New Mexico had the option of voting for all Democrat or all Republican candidates on a ballot, which often brings to mind the image of a voter pulling a “lever” for their party of choice.

Secretary of State Dianna Duran did away with straight party ballots after being elected in 2010, saying that she was not obligated because it is not in statute.

Senate Bill 276 sponsor Senate Majority Leader Michael S. Sanchez (D, Valencia, Bernalillo, District 29) and Senator Howie Morales (D, Catron, Grant, Socorro, District 28) testified before the Rules Committee this morning in support of the bill.

“I had a lot of people in my district, elderly people, who were very distraught on Election Day. They are used to the straight party voting option,” Senator Sanchez said. “Some didn’t get to finish their ballots. The problems in Rio Rancho, who knows if these were caused by the lengthiness of ballots and the lack of a straight party option?”

“This bill is meant to facilitate measures to speed up the voting process as well as to do what we can to make voting easier,” Senator Morales added.

The bill would add language to Article I, Chapter 10 NMSA 1978, to say “in a general election in which more than one qualified political party is represented on the ballot, the ballot shall be designed to allow the voter to vote for all of a qualified party's slate of candidates on the ballot by marking a single straight party option for that party's slate of candidates.”

SB 276 passed the committee 6-4 on a straight party line vote. It will next be heard in Senate Judiciary Committee.