

# ***NEW MEXICO SENATE DEMOCRATS***

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## **Senate Review: February 13, 2013**

### **FIRST-TIME PROSTITUTION OFFENDERS COULD HAVE CHARGE WIPED CLEAN**

People found guilty of a first offense of prostitution or patronizing a prostitute would be able to have the misdemeanor cleared as long as they remain out of trouble for six months after conviction and participate and complete a prostitution education-and-intervention program.

Senate Bill 512, introduced by Senator Linda Lopez (Bernalillo, District 11), proposes that the state Department of Health administer the education program through the department of health, in collaboration with the Children, Youth and Families Department and the interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative.

First-time offenders would be educated and counseled about sexual assault; assisted in finding a safe house if they were coerced into the crime by another; advised of the legal and health consequences of the of their offense; made aware of cases in which prostitutes were actually the victims of rape, assault or murder; given alcohol or drug treatment; and helped to find the appropriate social services if needed. The bill was referred to the Senate Judicial Committee then the Senate Finance Committee.

#### **In other Senate action:**

\* A bill introduced by Senator Jerry Ortiz y Pino (Bernalillo, District 12) would expand Medicaid assistance to cover patients who seek care from those licensed to practice naprapathy, an alternative medical treatment that focuses on the underlying ligaments of the spine. Senate Bill 503 also allows for Medicaid benefits to the services of licensed doctors of oriental medicine, chiropractors, and may include the services of dental hygienists. The bill was referred to the Senate Public Affairs Committee then the Senate Finance Committee.

\* Property owners who wish to apply for agricultural-tax designation on their land would get a little extra time to do so under proposed legislation by Senator Nancy Rodriguez (Santa Fe, District 24). Senate Bill 510 would allow the property owners to take up to 30 days after they receive the property valuations from a county to apply for the designation. Currently, property owners have until the last day of February to protest or apply for the agricultural rating for the previous year's tax assessment and the valuations are sent out weeks after that, usually making it too late to take action without prolonged protest procedures. The bill was referred to the Senate Conservation Committee before going to the Senate Judicial Committee.

\* A person who has already been convicted of a crime would be allowed to request DNA testing of any biological evidence collected during the investigation to prove their innocence, according to a Senate bill introduced by Senator William McSorley (Bernalillo, District 16). Senate Bill 491 states that, "New Mexico must enhance its procedures for considering post-conviction DNA testing so that all credible claims of innocence based on newly discovered evidence can be properly evaluated." The proposed law would apply to people currently incarcerated; civilly committed; on parole or probation; registered as a sex offender; convicted after pleading not guilty or nolo contendere; provided a confession; or have already served the duration of their sentence.

\* Disabled veterans would be exempt from taxation from soil and water conservation districts under a bill proposed by Senator Phil Griego (Bernalillo, Lincoln, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Torrance, Valencia, District 39). Senate Bill 517 proposes that any levy authorized by the Soil and Water Conservation District Act shall exclude the real property of a disabled veteran who is covered under the disabled veteran exemption authorized under state law.