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**NEW MEXICO JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION COMMISSION
RECOMMENDS RETENTION OF FOUR APPELLATE JUDGES STATEWIDE
AND 13 OF 16 METROPOLITAN COURT JUDGES IN BERNALILLO COUNTY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—September 17, 2010

ALBUQUERQUE – The New Mexico Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) today released its recommendations to voters on two New Mexico Supreme Court justices, two New Mexico Court of Appeals judges and 16 Metropolitan Court judges standing for retention. Under the New Mexico State Constitution, these judges must receive at least 57 percent voter approval to remain on the bench.

This year, JPEC's recommendations to voters statewide are:

Retain Chief Justice Charles Daniels, Supreme Court of New Mexico
Retain Justice Petra Maes, Supreme Court of New Mexico
Retain Honorable Michael Bustamante, New Mexico Court of Appeals
Retain Honorable Celia Foy Castillo, New Mexico Court of Appeals

In Bernalillo County, JPEC's recommendations to voters are:

Retain Honorable Julie N. Altwies
Retain Honorable Edward Benavidez
Retain Honorable Benjamin Chavez
Retain Honorable Sandra Clinton
Retain Honorable Maria Dominguez
Retain Honorable Sandra Engel
Retain Honorable Kevin Fitzwater
Retain Honorable Rosie Lazcano Allred
Retain Honorable Judith Nakamura
Retain Honorable Daniel Ramczyk
Retain Honorable Frank Sedillo
Retain Honorable Victor Valdez
Retain Honorable Sharon Walton
Do Not Retain Honorable Cristina Jaramillo
Do Not Retain Honorable Linda Rogers
Do Not Retain Honorable Rachel Walker Al-Yasi

This year, for the first time ever, the Commission reported a summary of the statistical results of its survey research in addition to its evaluation in narrative form. "We received input from courtroom participants that they wanted our evaluations to be more comprehensive and as transparent and understandable as possible, so we felt the logical 'next step' in improving our evaluation reports to voters was to include the summary of survey results," said Felix Briones, Jr., co-chair of JPEC.

(MORE)

NM Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission Recommends Retention Of Four Appellate Judges Statewide And 13 Of 16 Metropolitan Court Judges In Bernalillo County – Only add

For the Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges being evaluated, JPEC reported results of surveys among attorneys, court staff (including law clerks), and fellow appellate judges. For the Metropolitan Court judges being evaluated, JPEC reported results of surveys among attorneys, court staff, and jurors.

Results are reported on individual qualities such as integrity, fairness and impartiality, knowledge of the law, appropriate demeanor, and respect for court employees. For Metropolitan Court judges, control of courtroom proceedings and clear communication are also reported. For Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges, JPEC also reported on timeliness of rulings and ability to handle workload.

In addition, relevant populations were asked how strongly they recommend or do not recommend each of the judges and justices standing for retention. These survey results are also provided as part of the final narrative.

“Certainly our evaluations contain a lot of information for voters to absorb, but we hope they will study them carefully and take them into account when they go to the polls,” said Denise Torres, co-chair of JPEC.

JPEC has posted evaluations in English and Spanish on its website and will also distribute information to voters statewide through newspaper advertising, radio advertising, and a special “*Report to Voters*” distributed in Bernalillo County.

Absentee voting begins Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2010; early voting begins Saturday, Oct. 16, 2010; and Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2010. “We encourage each and every voter throughout the state of New Mexico to participate on Election Day by voting in all races and ballot measures, including the judicial retention elections,” Briones concluded.

For judicial performance evaluation information on each judge or justice, visit www.nmjpec.org or call Louise Baca-Sena at the Administrative Office of the Courts, at **(505) 827-4960**.

About JPEC

In 1997, The New Mexico Supreme Court created the nonprofit, nonpartisan volunteer New Mexico Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) to help justices and judges improve their performance on the bench and provide useful, credible information to voters on judges and justices standing for retention so they can make an informed decision. JPEC is made of up 15 volunteer members, including seven lawyers and eight non-lawyers.
