

**Commission Releases Recommendations
On Two Judges Standing for Retention in November Election**

ALBUQUERQUE – The New Mexico Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) today released its recommendations on a Supreme Court Justice Richard Bosson and Court of Appeals Judge Roderick Kennedy, who are standing for retention statewide in the upcoming election. To remain in office, Bosson and Kennedy must receive at least 57 percent voter approval according to the New Mexico State Constitution.

“Our 2004 report includes recommendations to retain, not retain, no opinion or opinion not available on two Supreme Court Justices and two Court of Appeals Judges who are running statewide, 60 District Court Judges running in 13 judicial districts throughout the state, and 16 Metropolitan Court judges running in Bernalillo County,” explained Felix Briones, Jr., chair of the nonpartisan commission.

Briones said the JPEC evaluates judges standing for retention who have served on the bench for at least two years. The Commission does not evaluate judges running in first-time partisan elections. In the case of judges who have served less than two years, the Commission issues a “no recommendation available” evaluation, he said.

Briones continued, “This is an objective evaluation process. We have gathered hundreds of surveys and interviewed the judges to prepare written evaluations of their performance and have also included information on their experience and education.”

To prepare the evaluations, the Commission reviews a self-assessment from each judge and survey results collected from court participants familiar with the judge’s performance. The results of the surveys are tabulated and analyzed by an independent firm, Research & Polling Inc. The JPEC then conducts an interview with each judge being evaluated to share and discuss the survey results.

After preparing a draft narrative summary of its proposed evaluation for each judge, including a retention recommendation, the JPEC gives the draft to the judge, then reviews the judge's response, if any, before releasing its final report to the public no fewer than 45 days before the general election.

"Our goals are to provide judges with information that will help them improve their professional skills as judicial officers and to provide useful, credible information to New Mexico voters on judges standing for retention elections," Briones said.

He said some 400,000 copies of the report have been printed and will be distributed through 12 newspapers throughout the state as well as in public places such as county clerk's offices and county courthouses. Voters will also be able to access the report on-line at www.nmjpec.org beginning at noon Mountain Daylight Time on Sept. 13.

"We recognize that the November ballot will be a long one, and that voters will be asked to make a lot of decisions. We encourage every voter to cast a ballot in every judicial retention election for which they are eligible. Our judiciary system works only if we all take the time to select our judges carefully," he said.

A summary of the Commission's recommendations includes:

Supreme Court of New Mexico – retain both justices standing for retention

New Mexico Court of Appeals – retain one judge; **no recommendation available** on one judge

District Court – retain 55 judges; **do not retain** one judge; **no opinion** on one judge; **no recommendation available** on three judges

Metropolitan Court – retain 11 judges; **do not retain** three judges; **no opinion** on one judge; **no recommendation available** on one judge

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission was established in 1997 by the Supreme Court of New Mexico. The Commission is comprised of 15 individuals – seven lawyers and eight non-lawyers, who are appointed by the Supreme Court to staggered (two-, four- or six-year) terms. These individuals are selected from nominations made by the Governor, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Speaker of the House, Senate President Pro Tem, House Minority Leader, Senate Minority Leader and President of the State Bar. The Commission must be broadly representative of the state – geographically, politically and otherwise.

For more information about the Judicial Performance Evaluation program, interested individuals may call **Louise Baca, Project Manager**, at **(505) 827-4960** or email aocmb@nmcourts.com.