

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ban Contractors' Contributions

YOUR EXCELLENT recent editorial, "Say 'No' to Corruption," highlighted two of the latest examples of "pay to play" corruption in New Mexico government. The common denominator in these cases, as in so many others, is lucrative government contracts.

Think New Mexico's 2009 report, "Restoring Trust," documented our state's long history of corruption and recommended that New Mexico follow the lead of the seven other states that have enacted laws banning political contributions from state contractors — and those submitting bids to become state contractors — to elected officials who oversee the contracts. This reform would take the "pay" out of pay to play corruption by putting a stop to political contributions from those who have a direct, financial conflict of interest.

This is not a new concept: the federal government has prohibited federal contractors from making contributions to federal candidates since 1940. That federal act, the Hatch Act, was sponsored by Senator Carl Hatch of New Mexico — yet more than seven decades later, here in New Mexico, we still allow state contractors to give political contributions to the elected officials who award them contracts.

We hope that New Mexicans will urge the candidates running for the Legislature in this year's election to support this important anti-corruption reform, which will help restore public trust in state government.

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