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OUR VIEW

Amendments focus on PRC, courts

New Mexicans will have a number of amendments to the state constitution to consider when voting. Here are our recommendations. We say no on Amendment 1, but yes on Amendments 2 through 5. Our reasoning follows.

Amendments 2, 3 and 4: These three amendments deal with the scandal-plagued Public Regulation Commission. Our position is that change is needed to improve the PRC. These three amendments will bring about a better, more efficient agency, while removing potential for corruption. Let's take them one at a time.

◆ Amendment 2 is a simple amendment but one that could have immense impact. It simply amends the constitution to allow the Legislature to require qualifications of PRC members and to call for continuing education once they are in office. Commissioners deal with technical and complex issues, ones that require intelligence, experience and the ability to analyze data, understand economics and engineering, all while maintaining a judicial-like impartiality about the goings on. More experience and education will help bring about a better PRC. **Vote yes on Amendment 2.**

◆ Amendment 3 is designed to help the PRC streamline its operations. Currently, the responsibility to process registering corporations is at the PRC in the Corporations Bureau, while other functions are at the Secretary of State's Office. The amendment would move all functions of registering and reporting for businesses to one place. It's a good move. **Vote yes on Amendment 3.**

◆ Also essential is Amendment 4, which would remove the Insurance Division from under the PRC. By doing so, the superintendents of insurance would be free of the pressure from commissioners who are lobbying for their pet causes. Two former insurance commissioners have endorsed the reform, telling the *Albuquerque Journal* they felt pressured by commissioners. Every superintendent since the PRC's formation in 1999 has either been pushed to resign or fired outright. Making the Insurance Division independent is a good move for consumers. **Vote yes on Amendment 4.**