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Common Cause New Mexico Gives Best in Government Awards to Legislators, Citizens, Rookies at Annual Luncheon on October 10

Common Cause New Mexico will honor three separate groups of citizens and elected officials with its **Best in Government Awards** at its annual luncheon in Albuquerque on Saturday, October 10, 2015. Common Cause New Mexico sponsors the lunch each October to recognize individuals who have made the year a bright one for good government and transparency. This year's luncheon will be at the UNM Continuing Education Building, 1634 University Blvd. NW, at noon.

Sen. Lisa Torracco, Sen. Daniel Ivey-Soto and Bernalillo County Clerk Maggie Toulouse Oliver will be honored with the **Best in Government Award** for their collaborative work on Senate Bill 643, an on-line voter registration bill that passed each chamber unanimously and was signed into law by the Governor. The new law, which was sponsored by Sen. Torracco, was a combination of several different bills introduced by both Republicans and Democrats during the session. It will allow full on-line voter registration, enable New Mexico to join an interstate group to resolve inconsistencies in interstate voter rolls, clean up the election code and facilitate military and overseas voting.

Rep. Jim Dines (R-Bernalillo) and Rep. Javier Martinez (D-Bernalillo) are to be named 2015 **Best in Government "Rookies"** for their efforts to pass House Bill 241. The bill sought to introduce a two-year cooling off period before former elected officials and cabinet secretaries could become paid lobbyists. In 2014 there were approximately twenty-six former legislators lobbying the New Mexico state legislature.

The bill was tabled in the Senate Rules Committee 8-1 after passing the House 57-10. At least 31 states and the federal government have similar legislation, which in a statewide poll enjoyed the support of 82% of New Mexico voters.

In the municipal category, the **Santa Fe Ethics and Campaign Review Board** will be recognized as a model for sound and enlightened administration of government ethics and campaign finance laws. The board was established in 2005, to resolve complaints of ethics and campaign finance violations and to advise the council on legislation to keep the city's laws up-to-date in the face of changes in campaign practices and constitutional rules. The board is currently working with the council and interested citizens to strengthen Santa Fe's popular public campaign finance system to ensure that publicly financed candidates will have the resources they need to offset heavy spending by privately financed candidates or PACs. For these efforts the Board deserves the **Best in Government Municipal** award.

For more information and tickets (\$25) go to www.commoncause.org/NMLuncheon or call 505.323.6399.

Common Cause New Mexico is dedicated to restoring the core values of American democracy, reinventing an open, honest and accountable government and empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard in the political process.