



creation of an Ethics Commission. While there is no disputing that additional ethics reform is needed in our state, I have always believed that you can't simply legislate integrity--you have to also live with integrity as a part of your core values.

The support for ethics reform shouldn't end after our vote has been cast and the headline is grabbed. It should be implicit in every action we take as elected officials. The backroom secret isn't that legislators are participating in nefarious activities during conference committees or that the absence of a video camera promotes corruption. The real backroom secret is that some of the very members who champion ethics reform admit to spending campaign funds for personal use; who publicly decry the ethics of the legislature while soliciting lobbyists to pay for their committee lunches; and support "non-profits" that call into question certain legislator's motives to advance their own political agendas.

In my opinion, there are worse things in life than being misunderstood, but I can't think of anything worse than being a hypocrite. Systemic ethics reform needs to be addressed not only by supporting laws that reform how New Mexico does business but by also examining our daily actions. It's our responsibility to raise not only our ethical standards legislatively but to also shine a light on our personal shortcomings when the microphones and cameras are off.

For most New Mexicans, ethics reform can't happen soon enough and the Senate has responded by taking a very important step in reforming New Mexico's political system by passing campaign donation caps. As we continue to grapple with ethics reform, we need to carefully consider how New Mexico transforms itself in the years to come. I'm confident that collectively we can continue to institute real ethics reform—not only by word but by deed--just as our parents taught us.

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