

State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
Santa Fe

July 28, 2026

GAIL ARMSTRONG
REPUBLICAN FLOOR LEADER
R - Catron, Sierra, Socorro & Valencia
District 49

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COMMITTEES:

Commerce & Economic Development
Transportation, Public Works & Capital Improvements
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Rules & Order of Business

The Honorable Manuel A. Sanchez
Chair
Dona Ana County Board of Commissioners
845 North Hotel Road
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88007

Dear Chair Sanchez:

It has been reported in the *Albuquerque Journal* and other New Mexico media outlets that State Representative Joanne J. Ferrary has resigned her legislative seat in House District 37, just months before a general election is to be held in which two candidates are running to fill the vacancy related to her decision not to seek reelection. I also understand Ms. Ferrary has endorsed the Democratic nominee for District 37 to fulfill her remaining term of office prior to today's county commission meeting.

I find this entire process to be not only suspect, but highly unethical. We are less than four months away from an election in which the voters of House District 37 will choose a new representative. However, if the Dona Ana County Commission selects Ms. Lori Martinez to fill this vacancy, it will be tipping the scales in favor of the outgoing political party's nominee in November. In short, the power of incumbency will be gifted to one candidate vying for an open legislative seat solely for the purpose of granting an unfair advantage to the Democrat Party.

I strongly advise the County Commission to either fill the vacancy with a non-nominee or leave the seat open. Further, I would like to remind the County Commission that when former State Representative Aliseo Alcon passed away, the Governor refused to fill the vacancy immediately and waited until well into the 60-day legislative session to make her appointment. Today, with Representative Ferrary's resignation, there is no immediate rush to fill this vacant seat because there is no legislative session until January 2027 nor is there any threat of a Special Session.

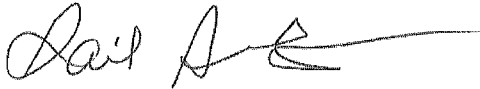
I am seeing a growing trend across New Mexico in which candidates are stepping down and the political parties are selecting replacement candidates totally outside of the

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democratic process. It is our job, therefore, to ensure our electoral process is above board and any interference in the democratic process must be avoided at all costs. Appointing a fill-in candidate now in a contested seat is disenfranchising the voters of House District 37 and undermines the confidence of voters that our electoral process is fair and unbiased.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gail Armstrong", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gail Armstrong
House Republican Leader
District 49

cc: Commissioner Christopher Schaljo-Hernandez
Commissioner Gloria Gameros
Commissioner Susie Kimble
Commissioner Susana Chaparro