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September 27, 2011

For Immediate Release  
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## **Electoral College or the National Popular Vote**

**The Center for the Study of Voting, Elections and Democracy at the University of New Mexico citizen's panel conducts its second of three public meetings on September 28<sup>th</sup> in Santa Fe. Goals are to involve public and advise elected officials on this important and timely national issue**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM—With a Presidential election just over one year away, there are major events happening that may change the way we select our President. In Pennsylvania and Nebraska, legislators are getting national headlines as they consider altering the method by which their states' Presidential electors are chosen. Nationally, a national popular vote movement has quietly amassed 49% of the electoral votes it needs to change the method of electing Presidents. New Mexico must be heard in this important, national debate.

UNM C-SVED has organized a panel of over 20 New Mexico election leaders, including County Clerks, representatives of the New Mexico Secretary of State, Legislators, business people, students, and community activists to analyze this issue and present its conclusions on what potential changes mean for New Mexico and our nation.

The panel, which includes Republicans such as New Mexico Republican Party Attorney Paul Kinsel, and Lincoln County Clerk Rhonda Burrows and Democrats such as Bernalillo County Clerk Maggie Toulouse Oliver, and Dona Ana County Clerk Lynn Ellins, held its first meeting on August 31. During a spirited and in depth discussion among all members, the panel received a history lesson on how the electoral college was formed, how the Constitution deals with it and how states have changed the way elections and Presidents have been chosen throughout the years.

## Is this any way to choose a President?

Among the facts presented:

- The Constitution left the selection of electors to the states.
- There is no constitutional right to vote for President, electors do that, and there is NO constitutional right to vote for electors.
- Electors are chosen by political parties and they meet after a Presidential election to select the President. There is no guarantee that they will vote for the candidate they are supposed.
- Four times in our history, the winner of the popular vote lost the Electoral College.
- In Presidential elections, it is not one person, one vote. A vote in one state is worth more or less than one vote in another state. In many states most people feel their votes don't matter at all.

In Santa Fe on September 28, the panel will mostly focus on the national popular vote alternative plan and reviewing in depth how it would operate and function. We will:

- Introduce the concept of state compacts
- Present the national popular vote plan
- Examine the implementation of the national popular vote
- Examine how would the national popular vote system be administered

“This is not a partisan issue” said Professor Lonna Atkeson, Director of C-SVED. “Both parties have benefited from the current system and both have suffered. I hope we can come together, both Republicans and Democrats, and agree on what is best for democracy.”

**The Santa Fe meeting will be held on September 28 from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM at the Joseph Montoya Building, 1100 S. Saint Francis Drive, in the Bid Room. The media and the public are encouraged to attend the meeting.**

C-SVED will conduct one final panel meeting in November. After the conclusion of its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting UNM C-SVED will prepare a summary of the panel's findings and present it to the New Mexico Secretary of State—who is charged with reviewing the national popular vote and the current system and then report her findings to the New Mexico Legislature. It will also present its findings to the public and the media.

Direct any questions to Professor Lonna Atkeson (phone: (505)-660-8976, email: atkeson@unm.edu).