

Stephanie W. Telles
7200 Settlement Way NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120

July 15, 2025

New Mexico Department of Justice – Submitted Via NMDNJ Complaint Portal
New Mexico Office of the Secretary of State – Submitted Via Email to sos.ethics@state.nm.us
City of Albuquerque Ethics Commission – Submitted Via Email to CityClerk@cabq.gov

***Re: Formal Complaint Regarding Alleged Bribery and Election Fraud in
Albuquerque City Council Race***

Dear Honorable and respected leadership:

Please accept the attached formal ethics complaint for your review and investigation. This complaint describes conduct I believe violates New Mexico law and ethical standards governing election campaigns. Specifically, it involves allegations that a campaign manager for a City Council candidate offered to pay my campaign debts in exchange for withdrawing a challenge to my ballot disqualification. Additionally, there were threats of further litigation if the challenge succeeded.

As a staunch advocate for ethics and accountability in government, a practitioner and educator in fraud and ethics, and as a Certified Fraud Examiner bound by professional standards that impose a duty to report suspected wrongdoing, I submit this matter in good faith and request that your office investigate these allegations fully and take appropriate action under the applicable statutes and regulations. It is my intent to support the preservation of the integrity of the electoral process and to ensure that any potential violations of law or ethical standards are appropriately addressed.

I. Summary of Allegation

I am filing this complaint to report what I believe is an unlawful attempt to influence the outcome of an election for Albuquerque City Council.

Specifically, the campaign manager, Scott Forrester, of Ahren Griego, offered to help retire my campaign debt if I would withdraw my challenge contesting the finding that I did not have the required 500 nominating petition signatures to appear on the ballot.

In addition, they threatened that if I proceeded with the challenge and won reinstatement on the ballot, they would file further lawsuits to remove me.

II. Nature of Alleged Violations

These actions appear to constitute:

- **Bribery:** offering something of value to alter the election process.
- **Election Fraud:** attempting to corruptly influence who remains on the ballot.
- **Conspiracy to Commit Election Offense:** coordinating with others to subvert election law.
- **Potential Extortion:** threatening retaliatory legal action to coerce withdrawal.

III. Applicable Statutes (NM law citations for reference)

NMSA 1978, §1-20-11 (*Offering a bribe*): criminalizes willfully advancing, paying, or causing to be paid, or promising, directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable consideration, office or employment, to any person for the following purposes connected with or incidental to any election. Whoever offers a bribe is guilty of a fourth degree felony.

NMSA 1978, §1-20-15 (*Conspiracy to commit election offense*): knowingly combining, uniting or agreeing with any other person to omit any duty or commit any act, the omission of which duty, or combination of such act, would by the provisions of the Election Code constitute a fourth degree felony.

NMSA 1978, §30-16-6 (*Fraud*): knowingly obtaining benefits through deceit.

NMSA 1978, §30-16-9 (*Extortion*): threatening harm to compel action.

NM Election Code general prohibitions on bribery and undue influence in nomination and election processes.

IV. Factual Details

On July 10, 2025, Stephanie Telles, Candidate for Albuquerque City Council, District 1 (“Candidate A”), was disqualified and failed to earn a position on the November 4, 2025, ballot for falling short of the required 500 petition signatures by seven signatures.

On July 11, 2025, Candidate A submitted two IPRA requests for copies of all District 1 candidates submitted petitions and for copies of emails from the City Clerks office

On July 11, 2025, the campaign manager of Ahren Griego (“Candidate B”) approached volunteers for Candidate A with an offer to “help retire campaign debt” if Candidate A would withdraw the challenge.

The campaign manager for Candidate B further stated that if Candidate A proceeded and won the challenge, the campaign for Candidate B, and potentially others, would file a lawsuit to remove Candidate A from the ballot if Candidate A is successful in their challenge of the petition signatures.

This conduct was communicated in phone calls between the campaign manager of Candidate B, two volunteers for Candidate A, and in a phone call with Candidate A directly.

V. Evidence

Written narrative and timeline detailing the exchanges on conversations between Candidate A, Candidate B, and two volunteers for Candidate A.

VI. Relief Requested

I respectfully request an investigation into these allegations as potential violations of state election law, ethics rules, and criminal statutes.

I am prepared to fully cooperate with any investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie W. Telles".

Stephanie W. Telles, MBA, CFE