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Contact: Matt Garcia-Sierra, m.garciasierra@nmlegis.gov, 505-205-5486

Embarrassing Session stumbles into fifth day

Santa Fe- Today is Monday, June 22, the fifth day of the 2020 special legislative session. The House of Representatives could possibly be here through Wednesday. The Senate on the other hand, finished their work on Saturday afternoon.

The session has been marred with confusion, lapses in public transparency, and has revealed cracks in the cohesion within the majority's ranks. This has caused the Speaker to resort to "breaking arms" behind closed doors to ensure party discipline.

The special session was scheduled following three months of excuses by the Governor as to why solving our historic budget crisis was delayed. It appears the Governor is more interested in preserving her record 20% increase to state spending rather than trying to address the \$2 billion revenue shortfall.

Prior to the special session, the Governor and progressive legislators tried to frame the session as an opportunity to provide hyper-focus on fixing the budget and addressing the serious economic ramifications following the Governor's forced shutdown of the economy. Yet, just hours before the session was to begin, the Governor revealed a slate of hyper-partisan legislation designed to enhance the Governor's power and further her radical agenda.

The public and legislators alike, were not allowed to read the text of any of the legislation the Governor deemed worthy of consideration until nearly three hours after both chambers gaveled in to begin their work. Much of the session was derailed by significant technical issues that prevented public webcasting; further limiting public access following a decision to prevent the public from entering the building to watch committee and chamber debates.

"I think lawmakers and the public are both in shock that this special session has been marred by such partisan tactics while our economy implodes," said House Republican Leader Jim Townsend (Artesia). "The Speaker should be embarrassed that we will waste more taxpayer funds to finish work that the Senate completed in three days. People are struggling to make ends meet, fighting to get government assistance, and businesses are closing. We were elected to make tough decisions and the only tough decision I saw made was to allow legislators to be paid while they sit at home."

The main budget bill was passed without House Republican support due to bipartisan concerns that the continuing economic ramifications will be far worse as the year continues and will lead to massive cuts in government spending while setting the stage for significant tax increases on New Mexicans.

The only win for New Mexicans thus far has been to prevent the tax department from levying fines and penalties on taxpayers due to the Governor's shutdown of essential government agencies and the private sector.

"There is a reason why Republicans call this session smoke and mirrors. We simply did not do enough to protect New Mexicans from massive tax increases that the majority obviously plans for January," said

House Republican Whip Rod Montoya (Farmington). “The real losers of this session are the businesses, workers and law enforcement who will pay the price for this lack of leadership.”