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## STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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For Immediate Release:

12/11/2023

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### PRESS RELEASE

*State Ethics Commission settles with former Torrance County Clerk Yvonne Otero for violations of the Governmental Conduct Act*

*Albuquerque, NM, December 11, 2023* – Today, the State Ethics Commission announces it has entered into a settlement agreement with former Torrance County Clerk Yvonne Otero. The settlement follows a civil enforcement action filed by the Commission alleging that Ms. Otero committed various violations of the Governmental Conduct Act.

In exchange for the Commission’s dismissal of claims, Ms. Otero admitted to two violations of Subsection 10-16-3(A), one violation of Subsection 10-16-3(C), and one violation of Subsection 10-16-3.1(C) of the Governmental Conduct Act by: (i) using her positions as County Clerk to solicit prescription medications from an employee on at least one occasion; (ii) discharging a taser beside the head of her subordinate employee; (iii) breaching the legal duties as County Clerk by pre-signing blank verification forms of vote tabulating machines; and (iv) by allowing Torrance County property to be used for other than an authorized purpose. Ms. Otero agreed to pay the corresponding civil penalty of \$1,000 for four violations of the Governmental Conduct Act.

Public officers, such as County Clerks, are required to treat their positions as a public trust and conduct themselves in a manner that justifies the confidence placed in them by the people. Ms. Otero abused her office in violation of those obligations by misusing the powers and resources of the County Clerk to pursue

private interests. The Commission's enforcement of the Governmental Conduct Act for these violations is intended to help restore the public's trust in its government and deter other public officers from misusing the powers and resources of public office for personal benefit or private gain rather than to advance the public interest.

Read the Commission's complaint in *State Ethics Commission v. Yvonne Otero* [here](#).

Read the settlement agreement [here](#).

### **About the State Ethics Commission**

The State Ethics Commission is an independent, constitutional state agency with the authority to enforce civil violations of New Mexico's governmental ethics and disclosure statutes. The Commission is comprised of three Democratic Commissioners, three Republican Commissioners, and one independent Commissioner who is registered as "decline to state."

For more information about the State Ethics Commission, visit [www.sec.nm.gov](http://www.sec.nm.gov).