Instructions: Grand Jury Petition on Todd Blanche, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Citizen Grand Jury Petition Kit · Blanche · v2.1 · November 10, 2026 · number updated, petition unchanged

The number

1. 2,376 valid signatures: the greater of 200 or 2 percent of the county's registered voters (Article II, Section 14 of the New Mexico Constitution).
2. The base is 118,765 registered voters on the Secretary of State's October 30, 2026 report.
3. The number stays 2,376 while the county has 118,800 or fewer registered voters. Before filing, confirm the number against the Secretary of State's current monthly report. If that report shows more than 118,800, the number is 2 percent of the new count, rounded up to the next whole signature.
4. How many more to collect is the petitioner's call. People generally treat 10 to 20 percent over the number as best practice: 2,614 to 2,852.

To do, by stage

Before the first signature

1. This kit has two documents: the petition, with its signature page, and these instructions. Only the petition and its signature pages are filed.
2. The petition text is final. Collect every signature on this version, and do not change the text.
3. The filer, a registered voter of Santa Fe County, writes their name in the filing block on the petition's first page. The other lines of the block are filled in on filing day, only on the copy that is filed, so no circulating copy carries the filer's contact details. A post office box works as the mailing address. The block goes into the court file, which is open to the public unless the court orders it sealed. Rule 5-123(A) NMRA.
4. Write the filer's name, and nothing else, on the "Person filing" line of every signature page. With co-filers, write one co-filer's name. A filer who also signs a signature line gives the registered residence address on that line.
5. Print signature pages only from the petition file, so every page carries the full printed text.
6. Staple each packet, petition first and signature pages behind. Signature pages never circulate alone.

While collecting

1. **Say this before anyone signs:** This petition asks the Santa Fe County grand jury to inquire whether Todd Blanche, now the Attorney General of the United States, gave Ghislaine Maxwell a move to a minimum-security prison camp in the week after he questioned her, to keep her from testifying or from telling New Mexico what she knows, whether his department is hiding the Zorro Ranch evidence from New Mexico's criminal investigation, and whether either act broke New Mexico's law against bribing a witness or tampering with evidence, or against conspiring to do either.
2. **If they want more:** In July 2025 a committee of Congress subpoenaed Maxwell, and the next day Blanche, then Deputy Attorney General, began questioning her himself, for about nine hours over two days. A week later the Bureau of Prisons moved her from a low-security prison to a minimum-security camp that its own policy closes to sex offenders without a waiver. New Mexico reopened its criminal investigation of Zorro Ranch in February 2026 and asked the Justice Department for the federal file at least ten times. It got 31 pages, mostly transmittal letters and public material, while the redacted files the department has published mention the ranch more than 13,000 times. In August it sued the department and Blanche. The petition asks a grand jury of this county to find out why she was moved and why the evidence is being withheld, and whether anyone broke this state's law.
3. **What if they say the Bureau of Prisons moved her because of threats against her?** That is what Blanche said on NBC's Meet the Press on December 21, 2025. He also said that every decision the Bureau makes lands on his desk to the extent it needs to. The petition asks who requested and approved the transfer and the waiver, and what was said about it in the interview. A grand jury can put those questions to witnesses under oath and press for the federal records through the procedure federal law sets.
4. **What if they say the Justice Department is cooperating with New Mexico, or that court orders bar it from sharing?** The department has said both. New Mexico's complaint lists requests from February 13 to July 14, 2026, 31 pages produced, and a flat refusal from the Southern District of New York. Federal regulations

give the department a procedure for sharing investigative records with a state prosecutor under conditions, and the department published 3.5 million pages of the same files. A grand jury can question witnesses under oath about who decided to withhold the records, and press for the records through that same procedure.

5. Every signer is a registered voter of Santa Fe County. Ask before they sign.
6. Each signer prints their name as it appears on their voter registration, signs, writes the residence address at which they are registered, and dates the line, in the circulator's presence. Rule 5-302.3(B)(1)(a) NMRA lists an address of record as the first way the court verifies signatures, and a missing address was the main reason the petition failed in *Convisser v. Ecoversity*, 2013-NMSC-039, ¶ 3.
7. Each person signs once. A duplicate signature is struck.
8. The circulator who witnessed every signature on a page signs the circulator statement at its foot. No names are added to a page after the circulator signs. The law requires neither the statement nor a notary; the statement gives the court a witness to how the page was signed.
9. Everything said at the table or handed out says only what the petition says, and names no person as having committed a crime. The privilege for statements in a court filing covers the petition as filed, not a flyer or post.

Filing day

1. Before filing, confirm that the count of signatures, with duplicates removed, exceeds the number.
2. Every signer line has a printed name, a signature, a residence address and a date. Every signature page is stapled behind a full copy of the petition and carries the filer's name. Number the signature pages on their "Signature page _____ of _____" lines. The filer signs and dates the "Signature of person filing" line at the end of the petition.
3. Photocopy every page.
4. File with the Clerk of the First Judicial District Court, Judge Steve Herrera Judicial Complex, 225 Montezuma Avenue, Santa Fe, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. No statute or court rule sets a fee for filing the petition: the district court docket fee in Section 34-6-40(A) NMSA 1978 applies "in civil matters," and the First Judicial District's posted fee schedule lists no fee for a grand jury petition.
5. Obtain a file-stamped copy or a dated receipt, with the case number.
6. More than one voter may file together: five voters appeared together as petitioners in *Cook v. Smith*, 1992-NMSC-041. Each co-filer fills in a copy of the filing block and signs a copy of the "Signature of person filing" line, with the date. Co-filers file as individual voters, not as an organization, because a corporation, limited liability company or other artificial entity can appear in court only through a licensed attorney. *Martinez v. Roscoe*, 2001-NMCA-083.

After filing

1. On filing, the court assigns the First Judicial District Attorney to assist the court. If the petition identifies a target, a person the grand jury would investigate for an alleged crime, the district attorney must use reasonable diligence to notify the target in writing no later than 30 days before the hearing on the petition's validity, and the court lets the target join the case before ruling. Rule 5-302.3(C) to (E) NMRA.
2. The court verifies the signatures by address of record, other identifying information, handwriting comparison or testimony from questionable signers. Rule 5-302.3(B)(1) NMRA.
3. The petition must identify "with reasonable specificity the alleged criminal conduct or unlawful malfeasance to be investigated." If the petition "does not reasonably specify alleged conduct that, if true, would warrant a true bill of indictment," the court "must deny the petition." Rule 5-302.3(B)(2) NMRA. The court also decides whether the inquiry lies within the permissible scope of grand jury inquiry, which includes whether the offenses can be tried in Santa Fe County and whether the time limits for prosecution have expired (Time limits, item 5). The court decides these questions before any grand jury is convened, and it may first hold a hearing and allow responses, as it did in *Convisser*.
4. If the court denies the petition, the filer may appeal by filing a notice of appeal within 30 days after the order is filed. Rule 12-201 NMRA.

Grand jury

1. If the court grants the petition, the court convenes a grand jury in Santa Fe County or submits the matter to a grand jury already sitting there. The court directs the grand jury to inquire into each violation described in the petition that the judge finds a proper subject of investigation. Rule 5-302.3(F) NMRA.
2. The First Judicial District Attorney or an assistant attends and conducts the grand jury, unless disqualified. Section 31-6-7(C) NMSA 1978.
3. If the district attorney's office fails or refuses to act, the Attorney General is authorized to act for the state. Rule 5-302.3 NMRA, committee commentary; Section 8-5-3 NMSA 1978.
4. The grand jury can subpoena witnesses and records. Section 31-6-12(A) NMSA 1978. Justice Department records, and testimony of its current and former employees about their official work, are requested under the Department's regulations, 28 C.F.R. Sections 16.21 to 16.29, and a refusal is contested in federal court. The district court pays grand jurors and subpoenaed witnesses. Section 31-6-13 NMSA 1978. The grand jury returns a true bill, which is an indictment, or a no bill, which is a decision not to indict.

Time limits

1. Article II, Section 14 and Rule 5-302.3 NMRA set no deadline for gathering signatures.
2. Bribery of a witness, Count 1, is a third degree felony. Prosecution must commence within five years of the act. The Bureau of Prisons confirmed the transfer on August 1, 2025. Sections 30-24-3(C) and 30-1-8(B) NMSA 1978.
3. Tampering with evidence, Count 2, is a third degree felony when the crime whose evidence was hidden is a capital, first degree or second degree felony, as the petition alleges. If the level of that crime is not found beyond a reasonable doubt, tampering is punished at its lowest level, a petty misdemeanor. *State v. Radosevich*, 2018-NMSC-028. Conspiracy, Count 3, is a fourth degree felony. Prosecution of a third or fourth degree felony must commence within five years of the act. The withholding began after New Mexico's request of February 13, 2026 and continues. Sections 30-22-5(B), 30-28-2(B) and 30-1-8(B) NMSA 1978.
4. No time counts toward these limits while a defendant is absent from New Mexico or is not usually and publicly a resident of New Mexico. Section 30-1-9(A) NMSA 1978.
5. These limits are part of the scope test. The court must determine "whether the petition seeks to investigate conduct that lies within the permissible scope of grand jury inquiry." Rule 5-302.3(B)(2) NMRA. A grand jury may investigate only criminal conduct or malfeasance proscribed by state law, "subject to the limitation on geographic scope of inquiry, the prohibition on duplicative prosecution, and any applicable limitations period." *Cook v. Smith*, 1992-NMSC-041. Section 6 of the petition gives the grounds for trying the offenses in Santa Fe County.

Objections you may hear

1. **Isn't this a federal matter?** The United States and New Mexico are separate sovereigns, each enforcing its own criminal law. *Gamble v. United States*, 587 U.S. 678 (2019). The petition alleges crimes under New Mexico's witness bribery and evidence tampering statutes and its conspiracy statute, and a county grand jury's oath covers "all public offenses against the people of this state, committed or triable within this county." Section 31-6-6(A)(1) NMSA 1978.
2. **Don't federal officers have immunity?** A federal officer who is charged may claim immunity under the Supremacy Clause, the part of the United States Constitution that makes federal law supreme. *In re Neagle*, 135 U.S. 1 (1890). In the federal courts that cover New Mexico, the officer has that immunity only if, in doing an act federal law authorized him to do, he had an objectively reasonable and well-founded basis to believe it was necessary to his duties. *Wyoming v. Livingston*, 443 F.3d 1211 (10th Cir. 2006). Federal law does not authorize giving a congressional witness a thing of value to influence her testimony or keep her away. It makes that a crime. 18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(3). Immunity is a defense to a prosecution, decided by a federal judge on evidence (Federal court, item 4). It is not a reason to decline a grand jury inquiry into what the facts are.
3. **What if the acts happened outside New Mexico?** New Mexico may prosecute a crime committed elsewhere that has a detrimental effect in New Mexico. *State v. Allen*, 2014-NMCA-111, ¶ 16. Section 6 of the petition gives the grounds for trying the offenses in Santa Fe County. The witness's testimony is owed to an investigation and a prosecution conducted here, the information she was to be kept from reporting would go to

an agency here, and the evidence hidden is evidence of crimes committed here, sought by an agency here. A crime whose elements were committed in different counties may be tried in any county where a material element was committed. Section 30-1-14 NMSA 1978.

4. **Isn't the Attorney General just doing his job?** The petition alleges personal acts that no federal duty includes: giving a witness a thing of value for her silence and hiding evidence of state crimes from a state prosecutor. Whether an act was a lawful federal act is decided by a judge on evidence if a prosecution is brought, and the grand jury's inquiry is how that evidence is found. Paragraph 6.4 of the petition.
5. **Isn't the refusal to hand over records just a legal position?** A refusal for the reasons the department gives is lawful. The petition asks whether those reasons were the real ones, and whether the records were withheld to keep anyone from being prosecuted. That is a question of intent, and testing intent is what a grand jury does. Paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 of the petition.

A prosecutor's decision not to bring a case does not stop a citizen petition. The court decides whether to convene the grand jury. Rule 5-302.3(B), (F) NMRA.

Federal court

1. A federal officer may move to federal court a state criminal prosecution against him, and any state proceeding in which a court order, including a subpoena, is sought against or directed to him, for acts under color of his office. 28 U.S.C. § 1442(a)(1), (d)(1). Expect the Justice Department to try, at the petition stage once the target joins the case, or when a subpoena issues or an indictment is returned.
2. At the petition stage the filer, as the petitioner, may ask the federal court to send the case back to the state court. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1447(c), 1455(b)(4). Which statute applies depends on whether the federal court treats the petition as a civil action or a criminal prosecution. Under Section 1447(c), some objections must be made within 30 days after removal.
3. Once a grand jury sits, the district attorney or the Attorney General, not the filer, answers any move of a subpoena or an indictment to federal court.
4. If an indictment is moved, the federal court either sends it back at once or holds an evidentiary hearing promptly. 28 U.S.C. § 1455(b)(4), (5). A claim of immunity is decided there, and a disputed fact bearing on it is decided on evidence. *Wyoming v. Livingston*, 443 F.3d 1211 (10th Cir. 2006).

What the filer does after filing

1. Attend any hearing the court sets on the petition's validity, where the court may take testimony from signers whose signatures are in question. Rule 5-302.3(B)(1), (D) NMRA.
2. No rule requires the filer to testify, though a grand jury can subpoena any witness. Section 31-6-12(A) NMSA 1978.
3. The filer does not present evidence or question witnesses.
4. Grand jury proceedings are secret. The filer makes no public statement about any testimony.

Can I stop?

Yes. Neither Article II, Section 14 nor Rule 5-302.3 NMRA sets a deadline for gathering signatures or imposes a duty to file, and no New Mexico statute penalizes a petitioner who stops collecting or never files. After filing, Rule 5-302.3 NMRA assigns duties only to the court and the district attorney and sets no penalty for a filer who steps back. If you stop before filing, keep the signed pages private, because they show signers' names and addresses.

About this kit

The Existentialist Republic publishes this petition as a template, with the allegations drafted and cited, and these instructions. The petitioner decides whether to file and when. This kit is activist material. Nothing in it is legal advice, and The Existentialist Republic does not act as legal counsel for anyone who uses the kit. A lawyer is not required under Article II, Section 14 of the New Mexico Constitution or Rule 5-302.3 NMRA, and petitioners commonly go through this process without one.