

The Maestas campaign's answers to the Duke City Ledger

Emailed to the Ledger on Oct. 19, 2026, by Jennie Ayers, campaign manager for State Auditor Joseph M. Maestas, Democratic candidate for New Mexico State Auditor, in reply to questions the Ledger sent him on Oct. 15. The Ledger's questions are in bold; his answers follow exactly as sent. The Ledger removed one line: the campaign manager's personal cell phone number.

Good afternoon,

State Auditor Joseph Maestas asked me to send you his responses regarding your email request from October 15th. They are below.

1. In this office, what would you do about audits of local governments' deals, such as data-center tax breaks and surveillance-camera contracts?

My authority over data-center tax incentives depends on whether public funding is involved. Surveillance-camera contracts fall within my office's oversight of public spending and procurement.

2. In this office, what would you do about protecting whistleblowers?

The State Auditor protects whistleblowers by allowing anonymous reporting and safeguarding complainants' identities under New Mexico's Audit Rule, subject only to limited exceptions required by law.

3. What's one thing about this office most voters don't know, but should?

The State Auditor doesn't just look for fraud, waste and abuse. Our office also helps identify financial problems before they become bigger and more expensive. Audits reveal weaknesses in financial controls, improper spending, and failures to comply with the law.

For example, by early 2023, fiscal mismanagement had pushed Mesalands Community College to the brink of closure. My office ordered a special forensic audit that exposed financial irregularities, identified needed reforms, and provided a path toward accountability and recovery. Our oversight helped Mesalands address its financial crisis and begin rebuilding public trust.

Accountability is not just about exposing failure. It's about preventing the next one and helping put public entities back on solid financial footing.

This may be the most overlooked part of the job.

4. Who are your largest donors, and is there any decision this office makes where you'd step aside because of them?

In both my previous and current campaigns, I've maintained a strict policy of refusing campaign contributions from independent public accounting firms. Because my office oversees their work auditing public entities, accepting their contributions could create conflicts of interest or the

appearance of favoritism. By refusing these donations, I proactively protect the independence and integrity of the State Auditor's Office.

No campaign contribution, regardless of size, buys influence or preferential treatment from me. My record demonstrates that accountability applies equally to everyone, regardless of who they are, whom they know, or what company they represent. The Office of the State Auditor is an independent, nonpartisan watchdog, and I intend to keep it that way. To date, I have not had to recuse myself from any matter.

With regard to donations, campaign finance reports, listing all donations, are available to the public, through CFIS.

He also indicated that there was no need to update the public statements you referenced.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Kind regards,
Jennie

Jennie Ayers
Campaign Manager
Joseph Maestas for New Mexico
[Cell phone number removed by the Ledger.]

Website: www.maestas4nm.net

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Maestas4NM/>