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Both Burgos and McCoy say they support the idea of the state requiring "real-time" reporting of contributions as they come in.

"The way it is now, by the time the public can look at our contribution lists, the election's over," McCoy said. "This helps create cynicism in the public arena."

"I don't like the way the (ethics) task force is going with trying to set limits (on contributions and gifts)," Burgos said. "I'm for 100-percent disclosure. If you have lunch with a lobbyist, put it out there."

Ethical Reporting can be found at www.ethicalreporting.com. Burgos' blog is at www.marioburgos.com.

Man of Mystery: Speaking of campaign contributions, all the candidates I spoke to earlier this week who had taken money from Jeffrey Epstein -- the billionaire financier recently indicted in Florida on felony charges of soliciting prostitutes -- said they'd never met Epstein.

It kind of reminds me of what my mom told me about taking candy from strangers.

I also was struck by The Palm Beach Post's description of Epstein -- accused of having sex with a string of teenage girls -- "Epstein, now 53, was a quintessential man of mystery. He amassed his fortune and friends quietly, always in the background as he navigated New York high society."

Five years ago in this paper, former New Mexican reporter Elena Vasquez, writing about Epstein's gigantic mansion in Santa Fe County, picked up on the "mystery-man" aspect of his character.

"Epstein is as mysterious today as he was when he began building his estate. He apparently is a private man who has sworn his ranch employees to secrecy -- making him an enigma to his 30 neighbors in the sleepy town of Stanley. One resident said her curiosity died down after many of her questions remained unanswered.

" 'They wouldn't tell anybody anything,' said (a neighbor), who has become friends with some of Epstein's employees. '... Whatever they do there is their business, so I just let it drop.' "

Lamont/Lieberman: So far at least 20 Democratic U.S. senators have said they will back Connecticut Democratic Senate nominee Ned Lamont in the general election against incumbent Sen. Joe Lieberman, who is running as an independent after losing to Lamont in the Democratic primary. Only three Senate Democrats say they're sticking with Lieberman.

Missing from both lists is New Mexico's junior senator, Democrat Jeff Bingaman.

"Jeff's not going to get involved," Bingaman re-election campaign manager Terry Brunner said this week. "He'll leave that decision to the voters of Connecticut. He's got his own race to worry about."

Bingaman is running for a sixth term against Republican Allen McCulloch of Farmington.

Other New Mexico Democrats haven't been shy about the Connecticut race. U.S. Rep. Tom Udall is supporting the Democratic nominee, a spokeswoman said. Meanwhile, Gov. Bill Richardson endorsed Lamont last week and urged Lieberman to step aside.

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