



THE VOTER

NOVEMBER 2008

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Albuquerque, NM 87110
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NOVEMBER 2008 UNITS — FAIR REPRESENTATION STUDY GROUP: CONSENSUS ON REDISTRICTING

Why is there so little competition in New Mexico elections? Why do the same people keep getting re-elected? Why is politics so polarized between just the two major parties?

The Fair Representation Study was approved in May 2007 as a LWVNM study to look into these questions. The group defined "fair representation" as when the public is able to elect representatives who reflect their priorities and values, and can hold these representatives accountable by voting them out, when necessary.

The Study Group looked at various factors contributing to fair representation: how voters register their preferences other than choosing one candidate per office; systems of representation other than single-member, winner-take-all districts; and how district boundaries are drawn (redistricting). Units in the spring of 2008 were held throughout the state to gauge how the membership thought about the importance of each of these factors and where they felt the League could do the most good.

All agreed that redistricting - scheduled to begin in April 2011 immediately following the 2010 Decennial Census of the United States - was where the focus should be at this time.

New Mexico essentially rewrites the book on redistricting every ten years. The 2009 Legislature will be a long (60 day) session and is the best immediate hope for setting up the legal framework for how redistricting will be carried out in 2011. For this reason, the group will be conducting consensus meetings on redistricting throughout the state in November.

Watch for your Fall 2008 La Palabra - it will contain the consensus questions to help prepare you for the consensus meetings. Please attend, and be prepared for a good discussion and for registering your opinions. (See pages 4-6 of this *Voter* for a study guide for the units)



Thursday, November 13, 11:45 a.m., Luncheon Unit

Reservations are required*
Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel
2910 Yale SE

Monday, November 17, 1:30 p.m., Midtown Unit

Manzano del Sol, Hobby Room, 5201 Roma NE

Tuesday, November 18, 6:00 p.m., Evening Unit

Fire Station #20, 7520 Corona Ave NE

Wednesday, November 19, 12 Noon, Sandoval County Unit

Corrales Community Center Meeting Room,
4234 Corrales Road

Unit meetings will be conducted by members of the Fair Representation Study Group, to include Cheryl Haaker (Chair); Katherine Campbell (LWVNM President/LWV Los Alamos); Lisa Franzen, Judith Binder, Delores Watkins, Josephine Porter (LWVCNM); and Barbara Goedecke (LWV of Greater Las Cruces).

*Cost of the luncheon is \$16, payable at the door. Reservations are required. Call the office at 884-8441 by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, November 10. If you prefer a fruit plate rather than the menu item, please let us know at the time you make your reservation.

EVENTS

October 7: Successful Launching of the
2008 General Election Voters' Guide
(Report on page 3)

COMING SOON

Saturday, December 6—Program Planning

Sunday, December 7—Meet Your Legislators Open House

Thursday, December 11—General Meeting Luncheon

Mark your calendar now —

See all the details in the December 2008

LWVCNM VOTER

**LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
CENTRAL NEW MEXICO**

Board Meeting

1st Thursday of each month
5:30 p.m.
Offices of
Sutin, Thayer & Browne
6565 Americas Parkway NE

Program Committees

Check with the following
League members about
community activities:

Advocacy

Delores Watkins

Drug Policy

Delores Watkins

Natural Resources

JoAnne Ramponi

Includes transportation,
land use, air quality,
water and energy

All League members
are welcome at all
unit meetings, committee,
and board meetings.

The *VOTER* is published
each month by the
League of Women Voters
of Central New Mexico.

President's Corner

By now you all know that we have published and distributed our largest and most impressive *Voters' Guide* ever — 48 pages that cover Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia counties and contain expanded information on judicial races. Once again we thank LWVCNM Co-editors Josephine Porter and Andrea Targhetta, as well as State League Editor Jennice Fishburn, for this outstanding publication. We have distributed 75,000 copies throughout the three-county area and have placed the *Guide* online where we expect tens of thousands more to view it. The voters of Bernalillo and Sandoval counties always look forward to reading their copies, and now the voters of Valencia County are familiar with what the League does so well. This is the time when we can all feel especially proud to be members of the League because it is the time when the public recognizes what we do. I hope that you have seen the recent media attention we received and the good response to our *Voters' Guide* Launch reception. We have also been out and about speaking to groups, moderating forums and registering voters. Our Voter Services Chair Dolores Waller will give a report on all that activity after the election, and our Office Manager, JoAnne Ramponi, can let us all know how busy the office staff has been.

Our activities may slow down a bit but they don't stop with the election. Some of our members are gearing up for the legislative session and our annual "Meet Your Legislators" event in December. However, this election season will be one for the memory books of active LWVCNM members who have worked so hard on behalf of the League.

Diane Goldfarb

LWVCNM BOARD HIGHLIGHTS — OCTOBER 2, 2008

- LWVCNM Membership Committee reports a membership of 370
- Location set for December 7 "Meet Your Legislators" Open House
- League office becoming busier; lots of interest in November 4 General Election

LWVCNM EDUCATION FUND BOARD

- *2008 General Election Voters' Guide* is going up on the website
- Arrangements firm for October 22 Judicial Forum at UNM Law School
 - League was asked to collect political mailings and advertisements; record radio/TV ads and personal contacts for a study by the Political Science Dept. at UNM

IN MEMORIAM

We are saddened to announce the passing of League member Allan Levine. He joined League in 2001, not long after arriving in Albuquerque. Our condolences go out to his family.

The League has learned of the passing of longtime member Joan Rosner in Miami, Florida. Julia White, a past President of LWV/ABC, said of Joan: "Joan applied herself to the Albuquerque and New Mexico environment. She had an inquisitive mind and an understanding of the broad connections in Open Space and Air Quality (the League terms). She was willing to step out and lead AND lead by inviting others to lead. The results were everywhere...including science in the schools." Our condolences go to Joan's daughter and family.



Celebrants at the Launching of the *2008 General Election Voters' Guide*

PHOTO BY AXEL HAAKER

VOTERS' GUIDE LAUNCH

The *2008 General Election Voters' Guide* was "launched" at a reception on October 7 at the Albuquerque Academy. It was a lovely evening, and we had a good turnout of both League members and candidates. Mary Wilson spoke and the drawing for our raffle was held. It was the first time we have held this event, and the feedback was quite positive. Someone from KOAT-TV was there, interviewed both Mary Wilson and Josephine Porter and gave us good coverage on the news that night. A photographer from the *Albuquerque Journal* was there as well. I hope you all saw the photo of JoAnne Ramponi in the October 9 *Journal*.

Thanks to all the *Voters' Guide* Launch Committee members who planned the successful event: Janet Ford, Cheryl Haaker, Donna Hill, Marilyn Morgan, Josephine Porter, JoAnne Ramponi, Andrea Targhetta, Susan Walton, and Dee Watkins. Janet was responsible for the outstanding publicity we received. Thanks also to Therese Barts for doing the flyer and to those volunteers who helped that night: Kathy Altobelli, Norma Argo, Jan Bray, Susanne Burks, Linda Cotton, Dede Eckles, Bob Ford, Lisa Franzen, Don Goldfarb, Axel Haaker, John Hill, Anne Nokes, Terry Quinn, Shirley Rawls, Frank Targhetta and Helen Wright. Janet Ford, Andrea Targhetta, Marilyn Hunter-Torburn, and Susan Walton also helped with obtaining raffle prizes. My apologies to anyone inadvertently left off of this list.

We once again thank our raffle donors: Southwest Airlines, Palms Casino Resort, Frank Dickey, Isleta Hotel & Convention Center, James DeChamplon, Janet and Bob Ford, New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, New Mexico Scorpions and Dorothy Walton.

Congratulations to our raffle winners: Josephine Porter, Karen Douglas, John Hill, Karen Orr, Carol Tucker Trelease, Jimmie Hall, Karen and Chris Bard, Jan Bray and Tim Eichenberg.

And thanks to all of you who attended, bought and sold raffle tickets and made the first *Voters' Guide* Launch a success.

Diane Goldfarb

DRUG POLICY COMMITTEE

The Drug Policy Committee continues to work on study and action. Questions to guide the Addiction Treatment Programs Study are being developed. The results of discussions are available. Contact Dee Watkins for a copy of these results if you have not received one and are interested. This is a good time to observe and/or join this committee. In addition to the results of the discussions on the questions for the Study, there are books, chapters of books and periodical pieces to read. In attending Drug Policy Committee meetings you will be welcome to join in interesting discussions.

This is also a time of action. Pain management bills are in Congress. State legislation is being developed related to the LWVNM Drug Policy position on addiction treatment which, you will remember, includes alcohol. Drug treatment programs, as part of prison reform proposals, are also anticipated in January.

The January 2009 units, sponsored by the Drug Policy Committee, are being developed on a variety of topics: Pain, Drugs and Prison. Your input is requested. Contact a Committee member or the Chair.

Dee Watkins, Chair

League of Women Voters of New Mexico
Study Guide for Redistricting Consensus
Fair Representation Study Group

The two-year Fair Representation Study has reached the Consensus stage. This November, the group will be visiting each local League to get your opinions, in order to formulate a new State position on Reapportionment and Redistricting. When the group solicited the opinions of members last spring, the general feeling was that it would be best to concentrate on Redistricting for the 2010 post-Census redistricting. The Consensus questions will thus focus on who should draw the redistricting plans, what criteria should be used, and how should the public be involved.

Information to help you participate in the Consensus discussions is provided in this Study Guide. It's brief and you can bring it with you to the Unit meetings in November. Also, bring along your *La Palabra* - it includes the Consensus Questions. We urge you to also explore the Fair Representation web page, recently updated, as well for additional background information: www.lwvcnm.org/fair/

Join us and be a part of League History!

Definitions of Terms Commonly used in Redistricting

Adapted from League of Women Voters of Oregon study:

apportionment	Assigning one or more representative seats to geographic areas or political jurisdictions according to some plan.
communities of interest	Areas defined by shared socio-economic, ethnic, geographic, economic, or other interests. The definition should not include any relationship between a community and a political party, incumbent, or candidate.
competitiveness	When candidates of more than one party has a reasonable chance of winning elections.
gerrymander	To draw districts in a way to give one group or party an advantage over another.
one person, one vote	The principle affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1964, which generally requires that each legislative district contain an equal number of potential voters, so that each legislator represents the same number of people and the influence of each vote on government is as equal as possible.
partisan fairness	Using political data when drawing district boundaries to purposefully make districts about equally competitive between political parties.
redistricting	Defining new boundaries for representative districts.

Criteria	Advantages	Disadvantages
Contiguous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current federal law requires this for congressional districts. ● Gerrymanders, with their odd shapes, will be easier to detect. ● It is easier for voters to identify their districts and participate in politics with their neighbors ● Legislators can represent their constituents more easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This may break up communities of interest.
Reasonably compact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gerrymanders, with their odd shapes, are easier to detect. ● It is easier for voters to identify their districts and participate in politics with their neighbors. ● Legislators may represent their constituents more easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Precise definition of what it means to be compact is required. ● Communities of interest may be broken up. ● Gerrymandering is still possible.

Criteria	Advantages	Disadvantages
Communities of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared traits or values may be more relevant than geography in producing accurate representation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no clear definition of community of interest. It is unclear how competing communities of interest shall be weighed against each other.
Residence of Incumbents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency helps to assure stability and seniority of representation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This can be used to either protect or defeat current incumbents. It can result in selecting voters for the incumbent, rather than vice versa.
Preserve “core” of previous district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If district is built around a community of interest or racial/language minority, preservation is a worthwhile goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all districts represent cohesive communities. The result might be protecting the incumbent’s core of support.
Natural geographic boundaries Jurisdictional boundaries (county, city, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with common interests may be kept together. Citizen participation with neighbors and media coverage of races may be easier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other, more important communities of interest may be split.
Be connected by transportation links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation links make it easier for legislators to represent their constituents. Voters are better able to communicate with each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mass communication and modern media can ease communication between legislators and voters.
Political competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If voters believe their parties’ candidates have a chance of winning, turnout may increase. Highly ideological candidates may be less likely to dominate than in districts that are safe for one party. An increased possibility of election victory may encourage potential challengers and increase the number of races with more than one candidate on the ballot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximizing competitiveness may dilute minority voters or communities of interest. No foolproof way exists to determine how competitive a district will be. Past voting or party registration data must be considered. The cost of campaigning may increase and discourage potential candidates. Because voters sometimes self-segregate, oddly shaped or non-compact districts may be required to increase competitiveness. A representative from a competitive district is less likely to be in office long enough to attain seniority.
Not favor any incumbent or candidate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incumbents don’t have an unfair advantage over challengers. Other criteria are more important than protecting incumbents or candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the legislature has a seniority system, citizens may favor incumbent protection to increase the influence of their legislator compared to those from other more competitive districts.

**Who Could Design a Plan that Best Assures Fair and Effective Representation in the Public Interest?
A Summary of Arguments**

Favoring the Legislature	Favoring a Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislators are accountable to the public at the polls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When districts have been gerrymandered in favor of incumbents or one party, removing those legislators becomes almost impossible. Accountability no longer means anything.

Favoring the Legislature

Favoring a Commission

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legislature is representative of the diversity of the total population. No commission can come close to that. • The California Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission favored legislative redistricting, concerned that minority gains in representation in the legislature could not be reflected on a commission. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commission would not have the built-in self-interest of legislators and would focus on statewide fairness. • A commission would act in the best interests of all residents including minorities protected by the Voting Rights Act |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations among 40 or 80 may be more difficult but a pluralistic society is better served. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A smaller redistricting body would require reconciliation of fewer positions and would foster greater adherence to principles and standards. • In practice, legislative redistricting is also done by only a few people. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislators are elected, not appointed. They have weathered public scrutiny. • Legislators have experience and superior qualifications in balancing interests and achieving compromise among different groups. • It is wrong to assume that all legislators have a conflict of interest; the priorities for many do not include partisan or personal gain. • Redistricting is inherently very political in nature, so it is wiser to address it through a political body, in the political arena. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redistricting involves change and commissioners are not committed to the status quo, the way legislators are. • Commission decisions would be the result of reasoned deliberations and not deals and swaps that violate important standards. • There is an inherent and intolerable conflict of interest in the legislature redistricting itself. Incumbent and party interests are the only priorities. • A commission would end the abuse of power by the majority party. It would not have legislators’ incentives to diminish or enhance any party’s power. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incumbents know best the make-up of their districts and the possible effects of different boundary changes. • Incumbent protection promotes the public interest by providing stability and experience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commission has no reason for excessive secrecy. It would open up the redistricting process and not be influenced by special interests. • A commission has no interest in self-preservation. It can restore public confidence in redistricting. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can be trusted to appoint commissioners who would act in the public interest? • A nonpartisan commission is an impossibility. Anyone asked to serve would be a politically informed person and would have substantial political biases. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many knowledgeable and honorable individuals who would serve in good faith and accomplish redistricting in the public interest. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of a commission is an elitist act. • All interested parties will try to influence commissioners hiding behind the “neutrality.” • Legislators, too, are persons of integrity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislators just want to protect their jobs. • Redistricting affects elections for the entire decade; it should be entrusted to persons of proven integrity. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission plans have been challenged in court. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan developed by an independent, bipartisan group would be less vulnerable to court challenge. |

INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSIONS

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures twelve states currently give primary responsibility for developing a redistricting plan to some form of commission.. These states are Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington A discussion of several of these independent redistricting commissions can be found on the Fair Representation web page at www.lwvcnm.org/fair/.

Cheryl Haaker, Chair, Fair Representation Study Group

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marjorie H. Buck
2526 Harold PI NE 87106

Ella-Kari Lofffield
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Kathryn H. Colbert
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Elena Spielman
1603 Calle del Ranchero NE 87106

Change of Address and/or Phone:

Frances & Dianne Barbour: 4900 Casa Del Oso NE 87111

Theresa J. Brown:

Rebecca Calvert: PO Box 2019, Ranchos de Taos, NM 87557

Ida Humphrey: 10501 Lagrima de Oro Rd NE #346, 87111

Clif Perry: 2304 Calle de Rafael NE 87122

Virginia Shipman: H: , W:

Virginia & Howard Stephens:

Suzanne W. Williams: add SW after the street name

New and/or changed email addresses available from office or JoAnne Ramponi for: Theresa J. Brown, Kathryn H. Colbert, Ilsa Garduño, Anne B. Gonzales, Marian B. Hoge, Martha A. Johnson, Elizabeth Madden, Regina G. Martinez, JoAnn S. Mercer, Ann Piper, Karen Rutledge, Edith Schneider, Virginia & Howard Stephens, Paul Stokes, Hilaire P. Valiquette, Deborah A. Walker, Karen and Steve Wentworth, Barbara Wexler.

Submitted by Kathleen Kimler Altobelli, 10-02-08

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NOTICES

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The next Advocacy Steering Committee meeting is on Wednesday, November 5, 2008, 1-3 p.m. at the League office. Updates on current issues and action will be discussed as well as pending projects such as the “Know Your Districts” project and the “Meet Your Legislators” open house scheduled for December 7.

Visitors are always welcome at the Steering Committee meetings.

Dee Watkins, Chair

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

On November 8 the LWVCNM Natural Resources Committee will meet with members from Sandoval, Valencia and Bernalillo Counties to review our local League’s land use, transportation and water positions to determine if these positions are adequate to cover issues in these counties. This meeting is in preparation for the LWVCNM’s program planning on December 6

The November 8 meeting will be at the Clubhouse in the building where the League office is located at 2403 San Mateo NE. The Clubhouse is on the east side next to the mailboxes. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m.

UNIT	LOCATION	LEADER	MEMBERSHIP
Luncheon 2nd Thursday 11:45 a.m.	Albuquerque Grand Airport Hotel 2910 Yale SE Reservations required \$16*	Marilyn Morgan	Vivian Boyle
Midtown 3rd Monday 1:30 p.m.	Manzano del Sol 5201 Roma NE Hobby Room (on first floor)	JoAnne Ramponi	Lois Reed
Evening 3rd Tuesday 6:00 p.m.	Fire Station #20 7520 Corona Ave NE Optional dinner after meeting	Jan Bray	Delores Watkins
Sandoval County 3rd Wednesday 12 noon	Corrales Community Center Meeting Room 4234 Corrales Road Brown Bag Lunch	Carolyn Lindberg	Mary Mulvany

* Luncheon Unit reservations: call the League office (884-8441) by 10:00 a.m. the preceding Monday. If you do not attend and have not cancelled by the deadline, you will be billed for the cost.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

- 4 General Election Day
- 5 Advocacy Committee, 1 p.m.
- 6 LWVCNM Board, 5:30 p.m.
- 6 Deadline, December Voter
- 8 Nat. Resources Comm, 10 a.m.
- 11 **Veterans' Day** — Office Closed
- 11 Fair Rep Committee, 1 p.m.
- 13 Luncheon Unit, 11:45 a.m.
- 17 Midtown Unit, 1:30 p.m.
- 18 Evening Unit, 6 p.m.
- 19 Sandoval County Unit, Noon
- 27-28 Thanksgiving — Office Closed

Membership:
You can join LWV anytime of the year.
Contact Membership Chair JoAnne Ramponi at 884-8441.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.