

**Real Conversations About Abortion:
The Way We Win
Legislative Fights in New Mexico**

Our November 9 luncheon speakers, Marshall Martinez and Julianna Koob, will address women's reproductive rights, specifically the ongoing issue of abortion. They will give us updates and debriefs on the New Mexico Legislature in 2017, with a focus on the strategies that win and ways that grassroots work are key. They will dig into the details of the most recent legislative session, how we have successfully stopped bad bills and worked to further proactive reproductive healthcare legislation.



Marshall Martinez, Director of Public Affairs in New Mexico for Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, is a native New Mexican community organizer who has been working in social justice for sixteen years. In his position he works with a staff of Planned Parenthood organizers across the state to lift up and amplify the voices of supporters in order to impact policy and culture around reproductive healthcare, including abortion.

Julianna Koob, Legislative Advocate for Planned Parenthood and the ACLU, has fought



to advance the rights of women and children for more than twenty-five years. She began as a domestic violence crisis advocate and later became a legislative advocate fighting for the rights of girls and women to make their own healthcare decisions, to receive equal pay and to have access to abortion without barriers. She has worked within a coalition to defeat multiple pieces of legislation and an Albuquerque city ballot measure that attempted to restrict access to abortion.

***Luncheon Costs: Members \$17, Guests \$20.
Your reservation is a promise to pay.***

Please make reservations for the November 9th Luncheon Unit Meeting by emailing lunch@lwvcnm.org or by calling the LWVCNM office (505) 884-8441 by Noon Monday, November 6th.

***Please specify if you would like a
vegetarian meal.***

Welcome New Members
Judith & Marshall Deutsch
Rodema Ashby
Susan Joan Quass & Roger Scott Powers

The VOTER
Published Monthly
The League of Women Voters^(R) of
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Office Hours

Monday – Friday

10 am to Noon

November 10 Office Closed

November 2017

Thursday, November 2 5:30 pm Board Meeting

Sutin, Thayer & Browne

6100 Uptown Blvd, 4th floor

Enter on North side of building- Doors are locked after 6:00 p.m.

Monday, November 6 Noon Reservation Deadline

Thursday, November 9 11:45 am Luncheon Meeting

MCM Elegante Hotel Albuquerque

2020 Menaul NE

Friday, November 10 OFFICE CLOSED

Saturday November 11 VETERANS DAY

10:30 am LWVNM Board Meeting

UNM Law School All members Welcome

Up coming

December 14

Topic: Immigration Panel

Chair: Karen Wentworth

January 11

Luncheon Unit Topic: APD Forward

Chair: Karen Douglas, CPOA

January 22

NE Heights Unit Topic: Campaign finance

Chair: Judith Binder

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HOW DO PEOPLE VOTE?

The great majority of citizens pay little attention to politics because they don't recognize how many issues really affect their daily lives. Many typically make choices based on their social environment and their mood of the moment. They choose leaders who reflect their own preconceptions and prejudices. Sometimes voters just follow the opinions of individuals they admire or even family members. There are citizens who don't pay attention nor do they teach their children the connections between what goes on in the Round House or in City Council and their own wellbeing.

One of the penalties (according to Plato more than 2300 years ago) for refusing to participate in politics or in our nation's elections is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.

First, we have to overcome apathy. Then, we must make sure that all eligible voters are registered. [Hats off to our VRAs!] Following that, we ask, "Is it easy to cast a vote?" And, will **all** the votes be counted fairly? Yes, **FAIRLY**. Aaha!

There is another process that ensures that elections are fair and that procedure is based on how voting districts are determined: Redistricting by a non-partisan, carefully vetted group of citizens; redistricting controlled by the same legislators whose goals are to remain in office.

Getting to know your legislators – at all levels of government – will only make you stronger, and it's easy to arrange an appointment with your local leader. Meet with him/her and encourage another League member, a neighbor, and a relative to join you.

We are faced with bitter political divisions, inadequate news reports, and elections-rules disputes; we must work harder and encourage Republicans, Democrats and those who call them-

selves "Independent" to become more informed before the next election.

Members of the League are deeply concerned and – all over the country – we are encouraging our communities to rally for FAIR elections. Which activity would help you be more informed? Will you be ready to encourage your legislators to make the necessary changes?

Judith Binder, co-President, LWVCNM

**The League is here to help
Please call the office between 10 and Noon
if you need to learn more about:**

1. Becoming a Voter Registrar Agent (VRA)
2. Redistricting policies in New Mexico before the 2020 census is completed
3. Public financing of elections
4. Meeting with my legislator(s)
5. Lobbying in person

Book Review

This Fight Is Our Fight: The Battle to Save America's Middle Class by Elizabeth Warren, 2017, Metropolitan Books, hardcover, 337 pages.

This is the second half of the review of Warren's book.. The book is easy to read with a lot of specific examples/cases and political rhetoric, but also a lot of statistics to prove her points. She is not cherry-picking examples that agree with her positions.

From the 1930s through the 1970s the American middle class grew both in size and standard of living in part because of specific government policies, but since the 1980s many of these policies have been deliberately reversed shrinking both the size and relative standard of living of the middle class. In the second half of the book

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she focuses on the role of unions and the reasons and effects of their decline, the growing role and effects of lobbying, the failure of trickle down economics, and the tightening grip of the rich and powerful on our political system – especially with the revolving door between government and big business.

Unions used to be one of the major public interest groups supporting the middle class. Their influence has declined with their falling membership and a growing number of states pushing “right to work” laws. While unions can still organize and bargain for their members, the non-members benefit without paying any of the costs – in economic terms they are free riders. Similarly, workers in non-union companies still benefit because the union agreements set the floor. Warren gives an example of a non-union charter school, whose strategy for getting the best teachers was the union scale plus \$10K. Another example of the decline in union influence is in the lobbying area. In the 1950s and 1960s with a lot of members they did a lot of lobbying and had a lot of influence on Capitol Hill. Now for every lobbying dollar spent by unions and public interest groups corporations and business associations spend \$34.

Warren also points out the dramatic increase in lobbying. Adjusted for inflation in 1983 about \$200 million was spent on lobbying, in 1998 it was \$1.45 billion, in 2003 it had grown to \$2.05B and by 2013 it was \$3.24B. Of the 100 organizations that spent the most on lobbying, 95 represented businesses. And even worse you don’t know who is funding the lobbying efforts. Even if there were more stringent reporting requirements, she describes the essentially money

laundering approach used by the Chamber of Commerce where companies can provide them money for a lobbying campaign which essentially becomes a Chamber effort and the actual funding company is not identified. A similar problem occurs with expert testimony (which should have high credibility) if the funder of the research and report are not clearly identified – which is often the case.

Finally, the revolving door between government and business also increases business influence, especially when industry regulators come out of and return to the industries they are regulating. This problem occurs with both parties, but today it is extreme from a president who promised to “drain the swamp.”

She contends that we are seeing an increase in trickle down economics, which did not work. It is a myth that tax cuts can stimulate economic growth enough to pay for themselves. Sometimes, under the right circumstances, they can stimulate economic growth, but never by enough to pay for themselves. (And in all the talk about tax cuts do we ever hear a discussion of when cuts are appropriate and when they are not?)

Warren’s proposed responses are to fight bigotry, build more opportunity for all, and demand more democracy. Under creating more opportunity she contends that most Americans support these types actions, but they still can’t get through Congress. As examples she says that over 70 percent think students should get a debt free education, almost three fourths favor expanding not cutting back on social security, two thirds favor a \$15 minimum wage, and three fourths favor more spending on infrastructure. Unfortunately, most of her recommendations are more

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political rhetoric to mobilize the democratic base rather than detailed policy analysis—although she does provide a lot of data identifying many of the problems. For example, if most Americans favor many of the things she mentions, where does the money come from – cuts in other programs or increases in taxes. Recall that during the “good times” when everyone benefited from economic growth, the top income tax rate was 70 percent. I suspect that if asked many people would say that this is what we need and we need the tax revenue to pay for it. However, remember what happened to presidential candidates John Anderson and Walter Mondale when they said we needed to increase taxes. Few politicians are ready to go there yet.

Olin Bray

DO YOU KNOW YOUR LEGISLATOR?

Or better still . . .

DOES YOUR LEADER KNOW YOU?

Democracy is not a spectator sport