

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO**  
2501 San Pedro Dr. NE, Suite 216 Albuquerque, NM 87110

**FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS' DESKS:**

LWVCNM sadly announces the passing of Carol Tucker Trelease, a long-time League leader who passed away at her home in December. Many LWV members throughout NM knew Carol as a generous and gracious LWV contributor, serving in roles as a member of the LWVCNM Leadership Team 2015-17 and as Secretary to both our local and state leagues. Her leadership of the Planned Parenthood organization was also promoting values supported by LWV positions. See page 5 for a Memoriam.



LWVCNM was fortunate to have Dr. Rachel Kleinfeld address our members and guests on December 10, 2020, providing a frank discussion of directions our democracy has taken and pathways which may yet emerge. Dr. Kleinfeld received her BA from Yale University and her Masters and PhD in Philosophy at Oxford University, where she was a Rhodes Scholar. She is a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Her stirring remarks caused us to reevaluate many of the precepts of our democracy that we always regarded as permanent and unquestionable.

The Electoral College vote on 12/14/20 finalized the selection of Joe Biden to lead our nation once inaugurated on January 20, 2021. LWV members have been anxiously listening as new appointees to fill vital US Cabinet roles are announced. 2020 has been a tumultuous election year where voter turnout exceeded all expectations, and LWV faith in our democratic process was reinforced. LWV members are aware of our focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and will critique whether these Cabinet picks actually “look like America.”

Dick Mason, LWVNM Advocacy Chair, will be addressing LWVCNM on January 14, 2020, discussing the upcoming NM Legislative session and bills that LWVNM expects to support. (See separate Voter article, p. 3.) He will offer predictions for the Legislative success of these measures as they negotiate the process of introduction, committee testimony, and vote in their travel to both the House and Senate floors. Dick also led a very informative Advocacy Training Workshop on December 5<sup>th</sup> for LWV and the public, featuring both legislators and lobbyists who presented techniques and advice to both the experienced and novice lobbyists. (See page 3.)

The LWVNM Education Committee, chaired by Dr. Eileen Van Wie/LWVSNM and Dr. Meredith Machen/LWVSFC, has been meeting regularly via Zoom to discuss the impact of the recent Yazzie vs. Martinez landmark court decision and education equity in NM. The committee is seeking an additional member from LWVCNM. Interested members should contact Karen Douglas at [ug90t16@unmalumni.com](mailto:ug90t16@unmalumni.com).

Our annual Program Planning session will be held January 23<sup>rd</sup> and offers an opportunity for interested members to identify issues that are not currently addressed in LWV Positions and to recommend studies to develop positions. (See separate Voter article, p. 4.)

**HAVE A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!**

**Karen Douglas and Karen Wentworth, Co-Presidents**

## THE VOTER

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## LEAGUE CALENDAR

All of the following are Zoom meetings. Members will receive invitations on the LWVCNMTopics listserv. Anyone who does not receive an invitation can email [president@lwvcnm.org](mailto:president@lwvcnm.org).

January 7—5:30 pm Board meeting

January 14—Luncheon unit meeting: Speaker Dick Mason, LWVNM Advocacy Chair, on League priorities for 2021 legislative session (see page 3)

January 19 —Noon NM Legislature convenes

January 23—10:00 am LWVCNM Program Planning Meeting (see page 4)

February 11— Monthly luncheon meeting

February 18—Virtual League Day at the Legislature (see page 3)

March 20—Noon Legislature adjourns

The deadline for the monthly Voter remains the 15th of each month. Articles and pictures are always welcome.

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**AND A WORD TO OUR NON-TECHY MEMBERS:** Do not be concerned that you do not “do online stuff.” We are working on ways to make these available to you too! This may be through pairing you with a “buddy.” It may be that several members can view the sessions in the conference room at our new office building. Or if you just need a little help using Zoom or whatever meeting software we use, several of our Board members, our Webmaster, or other volunteers may be sent to help you. And summaries of the presentations will appear in the Voter issued after the date of the speaker. I am sure other ways “to make this happen” and keep us all safe will evolve as we proceed. **Contact Karen Wentworth at [kwentworth17@comcast.net](mailto:kwentworth17@comcast.net) if you need help.**

**Correction to Membership handbook:**

Lani Desaulniers and Linda Adcox-Kimmel were left off the Board page in the new Handbook. They are both Directors at Large, and Linda is our Office Manager as well as Director. They each have a bio that was included in The annual meeting Voter. Apologies from Donna Rigano, Handbook editor. For this omission.

## OFFICE HOURS

Closed until further notice due to Covid Concerns.

Phone messages will be checked daily.

## JOIN US ON ZOOM FOR THE JANUARY LUNCHEON UNIT MEETING...JANUARY 14 AT 12 NOON.

### TOPIC: 2021 NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE SESSION....LEAGUE PRIORITIES

Richard (Dick) Mason will headline the January 14 noon meeting of the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. Members of Leagues throughout New Mexico have been invited to participate as Dick outlines the way the League will push our legislative priorities before this most unusual legislative session. He will discuss League priorities such as tax reform and revenue for essential services, reproductive rights, and legislative redistricting.



Dick has been active in political advocacy and electoral work for over 50 years. In Massachusetts he was Chairperson of Citizens for Participation in Political Action, a 3,000 member multi-issue organization. In 1995, he helped found the Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Health Care and was its Chairperson until 2002.

After moving to New Mexico in 2004, Dick became a Board Member of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico (LWVNM) and is Chair of the Action Committee. In addition, he is the LWVNM representative on the Fairness Project and on the Stakeholders Advisory Committee of the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange. Dick also is Chair of the Policy Committee of the New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils.

The legislative session begins at noon on January 19. This is a 60-day session. Because of the CoVid pandemic, the public will not have the usual access to the Roundhouse. Check the website at <https://www.nmlegis.gov/> for detailed information about how you can

see sessions online.



### VIRTUAL LEAGUE DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Watch Constant Contact for the Zoom link

10:30 am Welcoming comments from LWVNM President Hannah Burling New Mexico

10:45 - 11:30 am Redistricting Reform Legislation

Edward Chavez, Former New Mexico Supreme Court Justice

Justice Chavez is a former Justice and Chief Justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court. Chavez was born in Santa Fe. He was appointed to the Supreme Court by Governor Bill Richardson and served from March 10, 2003 to March 2018. Justice Chavez oversaw the litigation concerning the New Mexico House Redistricting maps in 2011. Justice Chavez received his undergraduate degree from Eastern New Mexico University in 1978 and his J.D. from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 1981. Justice Chavez was the Co-Chair of the 2020 New Mexico First Redistricting Task Force.

11:30 am - 12:30 pm Taxes and Funding for Essential Services

Amber Wallin, MPA, Deputy Director, New Mexico Voices for Children

Amber oversees New Mexico Voices for Children's research and policy work. She also manages the KIDS COUNT program and does policy research on education, tax and budget, hunger, and economic issues. She joined NM Voices in 2012 as a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Fellow, after which she was a Research and Policy Analyst. Amber has worked in the public sector at the municipal, state, and federal levels, working in the government department at New Mexico State University and the budget department at the city of Las Cruces, prior to joining the Voices team. Voices oversees the Fairness Project that advocates for fair taxation and revenue for essential services. The LWVNM is a member of the Fairness Project.



**Please Join Us**  
**Annual Program Planning Meeting**  
**Saturday, January 23, 2021**  
**10 AM—Noon, Zoom Meeting**

Log in information will be provided later. Please watch upcoming member communications for Zoom login information. Or call the League office for log in information.

LWVCNM members will meet to discuss the educational and advocacy paths to pursue in 2021-22. Current local and State positions will be reviewed for recommended updates and potential new studies will be discussed. All current positions are listed in your member handbook. If you are interested in proposing a new position or an update to a current position for discussion, please prepare a short summary of the issue or revision to present at the meeting.

***Do I need to propose a position or revision to a position to attend?***

No...All LWVCNM members are invited to this excellent way to learn how the League planning process works. Whether you are proposing a position or attending as a learning experience, please review your Member Handbook for current local, state, and national positions. **PLEASE BRING YOUR MEMBER HANDBOOK TO THE MEETING.**

***How is Program Planning different from Calendar Planning?***

The annual Calendar Planning meeting selects the topics for our monthly educational unit meetings. Meeting topics are planned through September 2021 and we will meet again in June to plan the next round of topics and dates.

The annual Program Planning meeting results in the education and advocacy positions adopted to move our mission forward. Principles and positions on public policy and actions/activities to implement these principles/positions will then be considered by the Board in March and adopted at the LWVCNM Annual Meeting in May. A similar process is followed for National and State Principle and policy proposals/revisions—presented at the National Convention in even-numbered years and at the State Convention in odd-numbered years, along with recommended action to implement the proposals (concerted study, concurrence, or action).



***If I propose a position for study or update to a current position, what work is involved?***

As mentioned, you will need to write a brief summary of the proposed study or update, how the position could lead to local League action with a local government entity impacted (or State League action with a State government entity), and why this is a timely subject for League attention. You should also be willing to serve on a committee to conduct the study/review and assist in the recruitment of other members to the committee.

Continued on page 5

## IN MEMORIAM.....Carol Tucker Trelease

Carol, age 77, passed away suddenly on December 9, 2020. She was known for her happy disposition, kindness to others, her unwavering drive to fight for social justice and reproductive rights, and polite honesty. Carol had a smile for everyone she saw at Coronado Villas Independent Living where she relocated in 2019 after many years in Sandia



Heights. She loved her daily walks, playing bean bag baseball, and being involved with the many activities her community offered. When she wasn't reading, she was visiting with the staff, promptly responding to email, or doing something to keep her curious mind active.

Born in Santa Cruz, California in March of 1943, Carol grew up in the Bay Area. The first in her family to go to college, she earned her Bachelors of Arts in Spanish from Mills College in 1965, graduating 7th in her class and Phi Beta Kappa. She was selected as a Fulbright scholar and spent a year studying literature at the University of Cordoba in Argentina. She moved to Colorado where her first husband, Robin Tuchler, was in medical school, and she taught high school Spanish. In order for her husband to fulfill his military obligations, they moved to the Navajo reservation in Crownpoint, New Mexico where he served with the Public Health Service. They subsequently relocated to Albuquerque in 1974 with their 3 daughters.

Carol was passionate about fighting for equality and helping people help themselves. This brought her to focus on reproductive rights and social justice. She was the CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Rio Grande for over 20 years, working to ensure women could plan their families and control their own destinies. She retired early as a promise to her second husband, Richard Trelease, and they traveled the globe as planned. When he passed away in 2005, Carol was given an incredible opportunity to continue supporting her passions and making a difference in the world as the Executive Director of the Nirvana Manana Institute. NMI was a foundation that made grants to support a sustainable population and for which the founder said Carol was the true heartbeat. She also traveled with Albuquerque International Association and other local groups, and continued her civic involvement as an active board member, volunteer, and tireless advocate for Planned Parenthood, the League of Women Voters, Popejoy Hall, the Senior Citizens' Law Office, St. John's Cathedral, the St. John's Thrift Shop, and many others. She was respected as an effective fundraiser and lobbyist at the legislature. Friends have called her "a legend" and remarked on her effective leadership style. She cared a lot about others, and gave so much to so many.

She is survived by her daughters and their partners, Ann Tuchler and David Davis of Phoenix, AZ; Sarah Tuchler McElvaney and Jason McElvaney of Austin, TX; and Ada Tuchler Portman and Greg Portman of Albuquerque; and her grandchildren: Taylor and Addison Portman of Albuquerque; Will and Avery McElvaney of Austin, TX. She was preceded in death by her late husband, Richard M. Trelease, and her parents, Arthur L. Tucker and Thelma Rose (Greer) Tucker. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her honor to Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains or your local affiliate, St. John's Cathedral Music Program, or any organization of your choice that would honor her.

### ***PROGRAM PLANNING, continued from page 4.....***

***Were there any new proposals/revisions to existing positions adopted by the Board as the result of last year's Planning Meeting?***

The consensus of the Program Planning attendees was to focus on the elements of the campaign for Making Democracy Work®, as recommended by the LWVUS and for which the LWVCNM already has positions. It was also recommended to publish a *Know Your Government* booklet, which was put on hold due to challenges of the pandemic environment. For a more complete overview of last year's Program Planning Meeting, please read page nine of the [February 2020 Voter](#):

***Questions about Program Planning?***

Please email your questions to Jennifer Black at [JBlack8162@gmail.com](mailto:JBlack8162@gmail.com) and we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

We look forward to working with our members in the vital League work of Program Planning. Whether you are a new member or a veteran, your input is greatly valued. See you on Saturday, January 23, 2021, 10 AM—Noon.

## THE LWVCNM OBSERVER CORPS MEMBERS HAVE JUST COMMENCED THEIR WORK. EACH MONTH YOU WILL FIND REPORTS FROM THE CORPS ABOUT GOVERNMENT MEETINGS THEY HAVE OBSERVED....

Observer programs (or Observer Corps) are a structured way for individuals to exercise their right to know. Organized under the auspices of a grassroots organization (such as the League of Women Voters, which is referenced throughout this publication), they provide a valuable service to the community. They help ensure that citizens are aware of the decisions that impact their lives, and they promote government transparency and accountability. An observer is an individual who attends a governmental meeting, notes what happens at the meeting, and reports back to the League and the community. By attending public meetings of local governmental bodies/agencies, observers learn more about what their government is doing. They learn about the issues facing their community and are empowered to take action, if warranted. They also learn how issues are being addressed. Observers keep elected and appointed officials on notice; they let them know that someone is watching what decisions are being made and how they are being made. They help ensure that the issues facing their community are being handled "in the sunshine," in the open. Ideally, observers are monitoring both the issues being discussed as well as the process by which they are being discussed. While not every item up for discussion will relate to a League's priorities, ensuring that the meeting is being conducted in an open and acceptable way is critical to all of the League's efforts and the health of democracy.



**CONTACT KAREN DOUGLAS IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE OBSERVER CORPS. THERE ARE MANY AGENCIES AND COMMITTEES TO OBSERVE!**

### THIS MONTH'S OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS ARE SHOWN BELOW:

#### Bernalillo County Commission

The Bernalillo County Commission has approved at least 11.6 million dollars to build a Route 66 Visitors Center on West Central Ave. The Visitors Center will display some of the furnishings from the old Caravan East nightclub on Central, including chandeliers, brass lamps, a claw footed bathtub, and lighted signs. The furnishings are owned by the City of Albuquerque.

The commission also received a U.S. Census report that showed New Mexico ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in rate of response to the census, with 58.7% of households responding.

The Commissioners also adopted a resolution requesting the NM Legislature to enact a law that removes racially restrictive wording from land deeds in New Mexico. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled racial restrictive covenants were illegal in 1948, but the wording of the covenants continues to be part of the deeds for land in New Mexico because there is no legal mechanism that requires their removal. This resolution requests the NM Legislature to create the mechanism so that clerks may remove the language from the deeds.

Karen Wentworth, observer

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#### NM PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

The PRC met today, and I continue to be impressed with the hard work of the commissioners and the very able staff. As a point of interest, the NM PRC is elected while the PRC in TX is appointed. As El Paso Electric is applying to both the NM and TX PRCs for approval for a new plant, this distinction came out. The TX PRC approved the new plant, while NM PRC had many questions/concerns and did not just "rubber stamp" TX.

As we know, NM is moving to renewable energy which means that wind farms/solar fields could be built in, say, Torrance or Valencia Counties, but then the transmission lines to ABQ would have to be built as well. A conflict is that few people want the transmission lines, but they will come with renewable energy. I am expecting that the PRC or the utility building the renewable field will get eminent domain to get access to land to build the lines.

I read the daily GTM newsletter and here are some articles that might be of interest.

*Continued on page 8...*

## Julia Brown Asplund to be Honored with a National Votes For Women Historic Trail Marker at UNM

A major initiative to commemorate the 2020 Women's Suffrage Centennial is creation of the National Votes for Women Trail (NVWT) across the United States. Up to five sites in each state can be nominated for a specially designed trail marker that is provided by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. LWVNM/CNM submitted an application for a trail marker to honor Julia Brown Asplund to be located on the UNM campus. We have now received approval from the NVWT and from UNM for installation of the trail marker near Hodgkin Hall, which is at the corner of Central and University. This is an ideal location to honor Julia because she was the first professional librarian at UNM and worked in this building to organize the card catalog. She also served as the first woman on the UNM Board of Regents in 1921-23, which met in this building.



Highlights of Julia's role in the New Mexico suffrage movement: Julia was a leader in New Mexico's fight for women's suffrage between 1911 and 1920. She served as president of the New Mexico Federation of Women's Clubs from 1914-16 and, in October 1915, helped to organize the automobile parade of more than 150 women to challenge New Mexico's U.S. Senator Thomas Catron on his views about women's right to vote. A few months later in February 1916, she was instrumental in forming the New Mexico chapter of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage and served as a vice chairman. This organization was pivotal in lobbying for ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment by the New Mexico legislature in 1920. She was nominated to run for governor by the New Mexico Women's Party (successor of the Congressional Union) in 1920, but declined the nomination. Julia devoted the rest of her professional life to expanding library services throughout the state. A more detailed biographical sketch is available online in the Alexander Street database of American suffrage leaders. Website address: <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1010596304>

The trail marker installation ceremony will be planned sometime in late spring. COVID-permitting, League members will be invited to participate in this Centennial tribute to a New Mexico suffrage leader.

By Jeanne Logsdon

NOTE: Thanks to Jeanne for all her work in making this honor happen!

### NEW MEMBERS.....

Martin Binder  
44 Chaco Loop  
Sandia Park, NM 87047-8511  
[bindebog@gmail.com](mailto:bindebog@gmail.com)

Margaret Yacisin  
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Laura McGowan  
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Katherine Tyner  
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**TELL YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN.**

PRC, continued from page 6....

[Meet Guzman Energy, the Power Company Coaxing Along the Co-Op Clean Energy Transition | Greentech Media](#)

Kit Carson Power, in Taos, an electric co-op, used Guzman to supply solar power so it could drop coal produced electric power. There are around a dozen electric co-ops in NM serving largely rural areas where distribution of power is less likely to occur. In addition to Taos, Farmington and Socorro are served by co-ops.

[Why Hyundai Bought Boston Dynamics, Offshore Solar, Wind and Wave Energy, and Smart Microgrids > ENGINEERING.com](#)

Hyundai is a very large Korean conglomerate. It is a good sign that the company is expanding its role in renewable power. Keep in mind that Avangrid, which will acquire PNM, is owned by a large Spanish renewable company.

[Clean Energy Funding Finds Its Way Into Congressional Spending Bill | Greentech Media](#)

Congress may/may not pass the bill now, but it does appear to be supporting clean energy.

[Electric Vehicles and the Power Grid: Roadmaps From California and New York | Greentech Media](#)

Electric vehicles are coming, from GM, Ford and Chrysler, so perhaps in a few years, you might own one. As electric vehicles are recharged at night, when rates are lower, all consumers will benefit.

[Southeastern Utilities Launch Plan for Regional Energy-Trading Market | Greentech Media](#)

As more utilities move to renewable energy, there will be a need to trade power, which will make the production of power more efficient.

[Swell Readies \\$450M in Financing for Solar-Plus-Battery Virtual Power Plants | Greentech Media](#)

Renewable power will need batteries to store power not needed at that moment for future use.

Better batteries, with days of storage capability, are under development.

George Richmond

## Recent Escalation of DOJ Criticism of the City of Albuquerque Police Reform

The 12/4/20 hearing by Federal Judge Browning was marked with harsh criticism by both DOJ attorneys and Dr. James Ginger, Independent Monitor for the 2015 Consent Decree between the DOJ and City of Albuquerque. Backsliding by APD/CABQ in imposing discipline when warranted by APD officers' unconstitutional Use of Force (UOF) had prompted the initial 2014 Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA). The severe evaluation resulted from lack of discipline recommended by APD Internal Affairs Division or carried out by APD line management for current UOF cases. (Prior evaluation of backlog UOF cases had no repercussions as discipline could not be applied if incidents had occurred exceeding time limitations for discipline). UOF cases under heightened scrutiny include Secondary (Injury complaint or actually verified), and Tertiary (UOF could result in serious physical injury, hospitalization, or death).

The current status of the CASA is institution of a Stipulated Order on the City of Albuquerque with required remedies imposed. A preliminary draft of the Stipulated Order was provided to CABQ 12/3/20 but this level of control is not as intrusive as placing the city in Receivership. The order will assign remote investigators to supplement the Civilian Police Oversight Agency's civilian Force Review Board (appointed by the City Council). Additionally, CABQ investigators will be visiting scenes of incidents, taking photographs, talking to witnesses, and supplying officer's Body Camera footage.

Judge Browning directed questions to DOJ attorneys who indicated this severe lack of accountability was previously noted when Maricopa County Sheriff/AZ conducted "Bad Faith" investigations resulting in Contempt of Court proceedings. DOJ also emphasized that APD officers are not "at will" employees subject to termination and have representation by the Albuquerque Police Officers' Association (labor union). The AMICI APD Forward coalition, including LWVCNM, will continue to follow the CABQ response to the order and report progress as warranted.

By Karen Douglas



## **SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM LWVNM PRESIDENT HANNAH BURLING....**

Since LWVUS withdrew recognition from LWV of Nevada, questions have come up about being nonpartisan. As a starting point, the LWVUS policy states that the League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. Our state position, which goes into more detail, can be found under Policies.

In practice, what does this actually mean? We all have our own political opinions. We all have freedom of speech. But in order to be effective when we speak for the League, we voice the League viewpoint, which begins with our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.

We do not only empower voters who agree with our positions. We empower all voters. We offer voter information and registration, voter guides, issue forums and all of our voter education efforts to everyone. We cannot do this effectively without credibility, integrity or civility.

The League has its positions, based on a thorough study of issues and agreed on via consensus or concurrence. We advocate for policies based on these. Do we support or oppose bills? Yes, we do. Do we criticize government policies? Yes, we do.

But we do not criticize or support political parties or candidates.

The League envisions “a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.” When everyone participates, we can do a better job to ensure a government that works in the public interest, a government that works for everyone.

We can’t achieve that vision by publicly saying we’re fighting with one party or another. We can’t do that by pointing out a political party’s mistakes or a candidate’s less than stellar behavior. Doing our job effectively, our job of educating the public and advocating for our positions, requires a different approach.



**EDITOR’S NOTE BACKGROUND:** Hannah’s message refers to the LWVUS withdrawing recognition of the Nevada State League. This is a rare and exceedingly serious action that the National Board took only after months of attempting to work with the NV Board in order to assure that the League’s reputation for nonpartisanship was preserved. Unfortunately, the NV Board failed to meet the high standards we all have come to expect from Leagues around the country. The basic problem stemmed from work the NV League was doing at the state legislative level to achieve an independent redistricting commission. As all League members know, we as an organization address our criticism to the ISSUES, not the people or a particular political party opposing the issue we support. That is a huge part of the League’s effort, not only to keep the dialogue as a nonpartisan discussion, but also to keep it as a civil discourse about the issues. The NV State President continued to violate this policy by publicly attacking a particular party and specific people opposing the League’s redistricting position including the Governor (in the media). She did this in the name of the League. LWVNM is very proud that our own State League so vigorously models the true meaning of nonpartisanship and always sticks to discussing the ISSUES, not the people. LWVUS President Deborah Turner made the following statement at the time she announced the decision of the Board to withdraw the NV recognition: “While we are deeply disappointed at the loss of the state League, we stand by our members and local Leagues in Nevada working to empower voters and defend democracy. We look forward to working with leaders in Nevada to rebuild a state League presence that fosters stronger partnerships and better reflects what we value.”

## EQUAL RIGHTS IN NEW MEXICO

William E. Warren\*

January 28, 2009

**Editor's note: Co-president Karen Wentworth discovered this informative article and, knowing how much League members love history, we have been printing it in installments over several months. Next month: What happened to the Commission on the Status of Women on the House Floor.**

**New Mexico ratification of the Federal ERA:** In the fall of 1972 the United States Congress passed an Equal Rights Amendment to the U. S. Constitution and sent it to the states for ratification. I introduced House Joint Resolution 2 on the first day of the 1973 Legislative session to provide for the state of New Mexico's ratification of the federal ERA. With the overwhelming support for the state's ERA as indicated by the ratification vote at the general election of 1972, I took the results of this general election vote to each member of the Legislature and showed them the vote tallies for their individual legislative districts. This provided considerable support for House Joint Resolution 2 in both the House and Senate. House Joint Resolution 2 was referred to the House Judiciary Committee where it was given a DO PASS recommendation and sent to the House floor. It passed the full House on a vote of 44-20 and moved to the Senate. In the Senate, it was referred to the Senate Rules Committee which gave it a DO PASS recommendation and sent it to the Senate floor. The full Senate passed this Joint Resolution on a vote of 33-8. This Joint Resolution was signed by the Secretary of State and New Mexico became the 27th state to ratify the Federal Equal Rights Amendment. If ratified, the Equal Rights Amendment would have become the 27th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Ratification by 38 states was required and the United States Congress put a 10-year time limit on ratification of this amendment. Over the 10 years, only 35 states ratified this amendment so the Equal Rights Amendment is still not a part of the United States Constitution. One of the problems is that the process for ratifying United States Constitutional Amendments in each state is not uniform and is left up to the individual states. Some states have set up procedural blocks to ratification, such as Illinois where a 60 percent majority in their state legislature is needed for ratification.

**The New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women:** By Executive order 73-11 of July 3, 1973, Governor Bruce King created the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women to consider problems associated with enforcing the New Mexico Equal Rights Amendment. This was a large committee of 38 members and was chaired by Dorothy Cline, a retired political science professor at the University of New Mexico. I was appointed a member of this commission. Early on, the Governor's Commission agreed that New Mexico needed a permanent commission to look at issues affecting women and that a statutory body should be created known as the New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women. It was agreed that this commission would consist of fifteen members appointed by the Governor, a majority of whom must be women. This commission was to be charged with numerous tasks including reviewing the status of women in New Mexico, conducting periodic conferences around the state to apprise women of their rights and opportunities, and recommending various methods and legislation necessary to combat discrimination on the basis of sex. I agreed to have the necessary legislation drafted by the Legislative Council Service and to introduce it in the New Mexico House of Representatives at the 1974 session of the legislature. I introduced House Bill 22 which established the Commission on the Status of Women and contained an appropriation of \$60,000 to support the Commission for the first year. The bill was cosponsored by 28 other Representatives and was endorsed by at least 24 women's groups across the state. The bill was ruled germane by the House Rules Committee and referred to the House Appropriations Committee for hearing. In anticipation of a constitutional challenge because of the state Equal Rights Amendment, on January 25, 1974, Representative John Tomlin and I requested a formal Attorney General's opinion on the issue. Attorney General David Norvell's opinion stated, "Possibly there would be some constitutional defects if such legislation attempted to prohibit the creation of a comparable commission on the status of men, but, of course, such is not the case." Norvell concluded that, "I can find no constitutional basis upon which to advise you that this bill carries any constitutional defect." Thus, in the absence of an actual court challenge, House Bill 22 was constitutional. At the Appropriation Committee hearing on House Bill 22, the appropriation was reduced from \$60,000 to \$45,000, given a DO PASS recommendation, and sent to the House floor for final action. What happened after this was exciting, to say the least. *[See the February Voter for the end of this saga.]*



**WE NEED YOU!**

The LWVCNM Nominating Committee has started its work for the 2021-2023 Board. We need volunteers to fill the following positions:

Co-President

1st VP

4th VP

Membership Director

Public Relations Director

Advocacy Director

If you are interested, call or email: Andrea Targhetta  
[atarghetta@comcast.net](mailto:atarghetta@comcast.net) or 505-280-8892

LWVNM Nominating Committee is also recruiting new Board members for the 2021-23 biennium. Board members will take office at the State Convention in May 2021. The Board meets on a Saturday every other month in different locations around the State or, as CoVid continues, via Zoom. Meredith Machen of LWVSFC chairs the Committee. Mary Wilson is the LWVCNM representative on the committee and welcomes calls or emails if you are interested in serving. No prior experience necessary! Contact Mary at (505) 881-6136 or T3Wilson@aol.com.

The LWVNM Education Committee is looking for volunteers from Central New Mexico to help revise the League's education position. The recent Yazzie vs. Martinez decision required the state to do much more to improve education practices in schools serving rural and low-income areas. We need two or three volunteers with some background in education, if possible. The committee already has some proposed changes to the policy, but they want more input. If you are interested and can spend a little time working with the committee over the next few weeks, please contact Karen Wentworth at [kwentworth17@comcast.net](mailto:kwentworth17@comcast.net) or (505) 263-9066.



**P.S. The job of VOTER editor will also be vacant starting in May 2021. Anyone interested should contact Karen Wentworth. Mary Wilson will be happy to train you for the job.**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR  
2021!**

