

**March 2021**

# **The VOTER**

**Vol. 86 No. 3**

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

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

Alan Ramos invited the LWVCNM guest speaker for the 2/11/21 general meeting. Dr. David Scrase, Secretary of the NM Human Services Department, addressed LWVCNM and provided insight regarding the Pandemic in NM One Year later.



During summer 2020 LWVCNM was attracted to the new office location at 2501 San Pedro NE by the promise of a 5-day per week janitorial service and a conference room which could be reserved by tenants. The janitorial service was cancelled, the conference room was repurposed and ongoing negotiations with landlord Petersen Properties representatives offering no suitable recourse. The office mail saga has also further escalated with assault of the mail carrier, and subsequent change of keys. Linda Adcox-Kimmel announced her departure to be with family members in MD by summer 2021. LWVCNM will be challenged to identify a replacement as



Office Manager with Lindsas dedication, efficiency, and management skills.

The First Judicial District Court found New Mexico had failed its constitutional requirement to provide an equitable education, especially to low-income students, Native American students, English language learners, and students with disabilities, and ordered the state to take immediate steps to correct these deficiencies. The 2018 Yazzie/Martinez decision was based on data that 80% of NMs students are in one or more of these categories. In June 2020, the court ordered NM to enact more laws to address deficiencies. The subsequent LWVNM effort to revise the Education Position included consensus meetings by the four local leagues. The LWVCNM Education Consensus meeting held 2/13/21 featured LWVNM Education Study Co-Chairs Dr. Meredith Machen and Dr. Eileen Van Wie with attendance by Chris Furlanetto, LWVNM Program Chair. LWVCNM meeting included Linda Adcox-Kimmel/Timekeeper, Karen Douglas/Recorder and Laura Stokes/Facilitator with participation by 13 CNM members. Judith Binder and Patsy Nelson have served as the CNM representatives to the LWVNM Study Committee. Multiple CNM Education Consensus meeting comments have been recommended for inclusion in the revised 2021 LWVNM Education Position.

Nomination of CD1 Representative Deb Haaland to the US Department of Interior Secretary post with US Senate Confirmation hearings February 2021 has prompted candidate forums for those seeking her congressional seat with projected NM special election spring 2021. LWVCNM will produce Vote411 candidate data for candidate consideration by NM residents.

1/15/21 CNM Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage Safety Consensus meeting results will be combined with LA, SFC, and the final SNM meeting held 2/9/21 for development of the LWVCNM SNF Storage Safety Position March 2021. The LWVNM SNF Storage Safety Advocacy Statement was approved by LWVUS December 2019. 2/19/21 APD Progress against the Court Approved Settlement Agreement and progress toward selection of a new APD Chief (separate article) are in the news as several Civil Rights bills are now being considered by the NM Legislature.

In League,  
Karen Douglas and Karen Wentworth  
Co-Presidents

**THE VOTER**

Published monthly by  
 The League of Women Voters  
 of Central New Mexico  
 2501 San Pedro Dr. NE, Suite 216  
 Albuquerque, NM 87110  
 (505) 884-8441  
[www.lwvcnm.org](http://www.lwvcnm.org)

**Co-Presidents:**

Karen Douglas  
 Karen Wentworth

**1st Vice President:**

Mary G. Wilson

**2nd Vice President:**

Kathy Economy

**3rd Vice President:**

Jennifer Black

**4th Vice President:**

Vacant

**Treasurer:**

Denise Blood

**Secretary:**

Ashley Benning

**Membership:**

Donna Rigano

**Voter Services:**

MaryEllen Smith

**Directors:**

Judith Binder  
 Lani Desaulniers

**Director and Office Manager:**

Linda Adcox-Kimmel

**Technology:**

Cheryl Haaker

**Advocacy:**

Alan Ramos

**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).

March 4 —5:30 pm Board meeting

March 11—Monthly luncheon meeting Topic: *Let the Sunshine In:*

*Ethics and Government Transparency*

March 20—Noon legislature adjourns

April 1—5:30 pm Board meeting

April 8—Monthly meeting.

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

-----

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.**

**2021-2022 Membership Handbook**

We will begin working on the 2021-2022 Membership Handbook next month. If you have found any corrections or updates please contact Donna Rigano at or (505) 899-0910

**OFFICE HOURS**

Closed until further notice due to Covid concerns.

*The VOTER Editor:*  
 Mary G. Wilson  
[T3Wilson@aol.com](mailto:T3Wilson@aol.com)

## JOIN US ON ZOOM FOR THE MARCH LUNCHEON UNIT MEETING....MARCH 11 AT 12 NOON.

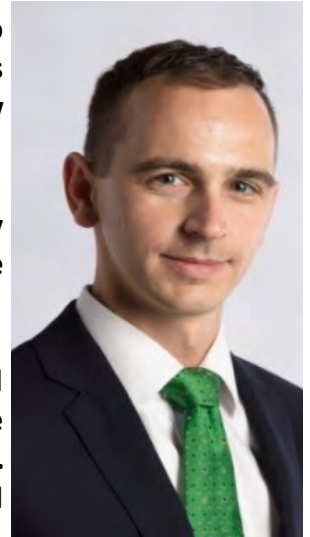
**TOPIC: Let the Sunshine In: Ethics and Government Transparency:**

**Speaker: Jeremy Farris, Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission**

Jeremy will present on how New Mexico's ethics and disclosure laws reflect two basic principles at the center of a representative, democratic state. He will discuss the new State Ethics Commission's role to vindicate these two principles in New Mexico, as well as the Commission's work in its opening year.

The State Ethics Commission Act requires the Commission to appoint an attorney "knowledgeable about state ethics laws" to serve as the Commission's Executive Director. The Executive Director can serve for no more than two six-year terms.

The State Ethics Commission Act requires the Executive Director to hire a General Counsel. The General Counsel reviews and investigates complaints filed with the Commission. The General Counsel can serve for no more than two five-year terms. The Executive Director also hires other staff members in addition to the General Counsel.



### 2021 Who's Who

We have received our 2,500 copies of Who's Who brochures, and boxes were delivered to the main library (1,500 copies).

There are three boxes (500 each) in the office. Ashley Benning, Who's Who Editor, has two boxes at her house so that she can use them to mail out to the various offices listed and so that she has some on hand if any members want to get a batch during the week. The new PDF copy has gone to Cheryl Haaker for our website. One brochure will be sent to each member as well.

Ashley has done some research on listings for Valencia and Torrance Counties. That may be possible to be included in the next Who's Who edition.



## IN MEMORIAM....CHRISTINE OLIVIA BURROUGHS

LWVCNM is saddened to learn of Chris Burroughs' death. Chris served as LWVCNM Voter Editor from 2010 - 2015. Before that Chris served as our Public Relations director from 2006 -2010 and had been a LWVCNM Board member 2006-15. Chris also served as an officer to the Albuquerque Press Women where she was an active member of Albuquerque Press Women and Friends and had served several years as an officer in the organization.



Christine Olivia Burroughs, 68, of Albuquerque passed away Jan. 29, 2021 at Bear Canyon Rehabilitation Center. The youngest of four children of Nick Petrison and Ann Tudor, she was born in Canton, Ohio where she grew up and would later move to Austin, Texas and eventually to New Mexico.

Having a flair for the written word, Chris earned a BA degree in journalism from Kent State University in 1974 and a MA in communications from the University of New Mexico in 1996. She started her writing career as a journalist for the Round Rock Leader in Texas and would later work in communications for Sandia Labs, the University of New Mexico and Hearst Public Relations. At the time of her retirement, she was a Marketing Communications Manager at Central New Mexico Community College. Chris also served as an officer for League of Woman Voters and for the Albuquerque Press Women, having been a member for many years.

Chris's family and friends are left heartbroken for her departure. You didn't have to know her long before you realized that in Chris you had one of the most non-judgmental people you would ever encounter. We will always remember her for her sincere, gentle nature, her assiduous approach to her career, her relentless support to those she loved and her special affection for Basenji dogs. We take a little comfort knowing that Chris is now with her son Stacy who passed five years ago. Chris is survived by her spouse, James Burroughs of Albuquerque; her sister Vicky and her sister's spouse Henry Lewin of Griffin, GA; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A virtual Memorial service will be held for Chris will be held Saturday, March 13, 2021 at 2:00 PM MST. RSVP to Attend the Virtual Memorial Gathering at <https://virtualmemorialgatherings.com/memorial-services/christine-burroughs/>

You will be directed to a confirmation page with details about what to expect next and you will receive an email with a link to join the gathering. Please check your spam and junk email folders for the email.

## ANNOUNCING: NEW ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The League of Women Voters Central New Mexico is pleased to announce the formation of an Advocacy Committee dedicated to identifying local issues in our four service areas: Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance and Valencia Counties. Join the committee and *make a difference* locally. Working with our Observer Corps, the committee will identify and distill the issues of importance that impact our daily life. The committee will report these issues to the general membership and to the LWVCNM Board of Directors who will determine which issues command the League's attention.

We are also recruiting members to join our Observer Corps. These volunteers attend meetings of local Boards and Commissions and provide to League members synopses of these public meetings. They are the Ambassadors whose efforts bring to light the important issues of the day; efforts which are greatly appreciated by the Board of Directors. To join or to obtain more information, please contact Advocacy Committee Chair Alan Ramos. His email address is: [aramos@aerlaw.com](mailto:aramos@aerlaw.com).

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



HIS MONTH'S OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS ARE SHOWN BELOW :

LWVCNM Observer Report Summary: of  
City of Albuquerque Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) Meeting  
February 16, 2021 5-7 pm (submitted by Lani Desaulniers)

(Meeting Agenda and Minutes can be found on the MHRAC website.)

Issues addressed during this session:

- Brief discussion of proposed External Force Investigation (EFIT) Team – which will review level 2 & 3 Use of Force Investigations. It is anticipated that that this may impact the work of MHRAC.
- Albuquerque Community Safety Department – Mariela Ruiz- Angel. Leadership and staff are being hired. More information is available at <https://www.cabq.gov/acs>
- New Homeless Shelter Update – Quinn Donnay, Family and Community Services . Plans are still in the works for possible use of old Lovelace facility on Gibson, as well as two smaller shelters for single men and for single women. Westside Emergency Housing Center (former prison) still operational, but now undergoing upgrades. City opened overflow shelters during cold weather accommodating 81 additional people. Call 311, or 244-8604 after hours, for emergency shelter request.
- Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Program (New Directions), Laura Braun, Program Manager, through 2nd Judicial District Court - funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant- current enrollment 35
  - o Treatment Court – providing Community Based Mental Health treatment under court commitment- generally 1 year duration
  - o People with mental health issues who have struggled with voluntary treatment adherence and have been involved in a serious or violent incident which involved threat or harm to themselves or others.
  - o Goal is to keep clients out of hospital, incarceration, court system
  - o Hopeworks is the community partner providing individualized services which include Intensive Case Management, Psychiatric Services/Medication Monitoring, Substance Abuse Treatment
  - o 2016 NM Law authorizing this program limits compulsory treatment, but treatment guardians may be used
  - o Judge Beatrice Brickhouse is the presiding AOT Civil Court Judge
- New Program: Non-Law Enforcement Mobile Crisis Teams (NLMCT) through Bernalillo County Fire Department, Charlie Verpleugh Asst Director, Bern Co Behavioral Health
  - o Funded by Bern Co 2015 tax for Behavioral Health services
  - o Paramedic and Masters level BH clinician certified in Enhanced Crisis Intervention response
  - o 911 Calls in Bern Co -noncriminal low acuity BH calls, including children, adolescents and adults
  - o Officers may request NLMCT team response through dispatch
  - o Should be implemented in coming months, staff is being hired.
  - o Discussion about the role of this program vis a vis APD Crisis Response Team, issues of ensuring safety of NLMCT team members
- Body Camera Legislation Update – Danny Whatley, of NoonDay Ministries, spoke to the attorney general about concerns about mental health privacy issues and release of body camera video footage. There is little guidance provided by the current legislation and the IPRA (Inspection of Public Records Act). MHRAC will work on the issue with NAMI and other partners to propose a legislative fix to protect patient's rights to confidentiality.
- 40 Hour Crisis Intervention Training Course ongoing –NoonDay will present a Zoom session next week
- Monthly meetings every 3rd Tuesday (open to the public). Next meeting: March 16th 5-7pm.

## APD-DOJ Court Approved Settlement Agreement and 2021 Stipulated Order

By KMDouglas

The February 19, 2021 meeting involving the US DOJ Civil Rights Division/Paul Killebrew, Assistant US Attorney/Elizabeth Martinez, City of Albuquerque Attorneys/Esteban Aguilar and Lindsay Van Meter, Interim APD Chief Medina, APD Professional Standards and Accountability Deputy Chief Garcia, APD Internal Affairs Commander Lowe, and APD Forward representatives was convened to discuss the recent court Stipulated Order. The 12th Quarterly Independent Monitor's Report (IMR) cited APD failure to impose disciplinary measures recommended by the Civilian Police Oversight Agency Force (appointed by City Council) for excessive officer Use of Force cases.

APD Internal Affairs will increase the Internal Affairs Force Division staffing to 25 FTEs. Training by contractor External Force Investigation Team (EFIT) for Force Investigations conducted by APD Internal Affairs will be a 9-month Program. US DOJ will have input on hiring for Force Investigators. APD performance improvement in applying discipline within schedule would result in no renewal of the 9-month order. EFIT will have the authority to assume investigations from APD if APD efforts are not timely but will not supervise CABQ employees/investigators. This contract which will increase APD technical assistance resulted from the court Order filed by the Independent Monitor, Dr. James Ginger. Dr. Ginger will evaluate initial Use of Force investigations to monitor progress. The contractor team will serve as a buddy system with current APD Internal Affairs Investigators to expedite training of APD personnel.

US DOJ/Killebrew indicated this was an extraordinary measure and that APD officers/management continuing failure to impose discipline would result in dismissal. Actions by either the Interim APD Chief or any APD Deputy chief to ignore or undermine discipline of officers would result in a subsequent court order. Killebrew also stated that EFIT reduction in standards would be monitored by Dr. Ginger who had been selected as Albuquerque CASA Independent Monitor due to his prior experience with DOJ Consent Decrees. CABQ attorney Van Meter agreed that the Internal Affairs Investigative process will be filed with the federal court and recognized that current APD Internal Affairs investigations were inadequate. Results reported in the upcoming 13th or 14th IMR will indicate whether these efforts are successful. CABQ Attorney Aguilar noted that applying EFIT had been helpful in prior situations, (e.g., Maricopa County).

APD Internal Affairs Force Division Commander Lowe discussed addition of employees with experience in both the Crisis Intervention Team and field officer assignments and current efforts to mentor APD 1st line supervisors. Internal Affairs employees are also now reporting to duty on-site rather than working remotely as previously during 2020.

Observer reports for the NM PRC will no longer be printed in the Voter since they are being sent to members via LVCNM Topics. However, the below article from Observer George Richmond has educational value above and beyond the League Observer Corps.

### NM PRC OBSERVER REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 24, 2021 MEETING

THIS MEETING HAS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO ANY ONE WHO USES ELECTRIC POWER OR NATURAL GAS.

At 143 PM the meeting adjourned, but I want to share much critical news on events and developments which will continue for some time. BACKGROUND: During Feb 2011, NM suffered cold weather which resulted in NM Gas not being able to serve all its customers so the company dropped service which in utility speak is "load shedding" to people out of ABQ, but in rural areas. In cold weather this caused much hardship, so the company made major efforts to have diversified gas sources and made major capital investments to have more storage and ability to supply all customers.

NM Gas and three electric companies and the Managers of the Western Grid

...14 western states with electric companies presented to the NM PRC today about the period Feb 11-18 when NM suffered some cold, not as bad as TX, but there were problems.

From the Gas view, NM Gas now buys gas from TX, NM and CO and has more storage as well. Further, they were aware of the pending cold weather and began buying gas before the cold spell hit. However, they needed more gas on Feb 14 particularly, and went to the spot market where they paid \$250/MCF as compared with \$2.50/MCF. Now as a large company, they can pay for the gas when the bill is due next month. However, the gas costs are passed through to the customer and NM Gas will meet with the NM PRC shortly to work out how that will be done. Over time I hope. The NM Attorney General is looking in to the gas price gouging but such an investigation will take time.

Continued on next page.....

PRC, continued from previous page....

Now, let's move to Electric Power.

Western Electric Coordinating Council, who manage the Western Grid in the US spoke. (There are three grids or transmission systems in the US, established by Federal Law, Eastern, Western and TX) TX had major problems and still have electric outages. Further, the state's Governor Gregg Abbott will speak tonight @ 500 PM MST. It will be on the news tomorrow.)

The purpose of the Grids is in very general terms, is to help a utility with a large demand for power, help provide the service and not drop or shed customers. We have all read about the fires in CA and the power problems there. If the electric companies in other states had not supplied power the problem would have been much worse...and I feel that we all can agree that electric power, supplied on demand, is vital to all.

The other presenters were Southwestern Public Service, which operates in West TX and parts of NM, in the Clovis area, PNM, and El Paso Electric which serves El Paso, parts of SW TX And some of Southern NM.

All companies were able to supply clients with no dropping of services. In some cases high winds took down power lines, but these were repaired in the normal manner and the long losses of service common to TX were not present.

In the case of SPS, this company is a part of the Xcel company which operates in a number of states and is part of both the Eastern and Western power grids. Xcel was able to buy power, some of which went to TX and NM. While their wind turbines are insulated, they did have some outages.

ALL companies have generating stations powered by natural gas, and you guessed it, the prices paid on Feb 14/15 were very high. Again the NM AG is investigating the price gouging, which happened, and in time we will get a report.

Another vital point, made by all presenters, and NM PRC is:

How much spare capacity should there be?

How and who pays for it?

I concur that climate extremes/storms will be more common...but How much insurance/protection is needed?

Over time, the NM PRC will address these points...and our bills will go up. Another issue will be cutting off service to people who can not pay. As NM has a number of poor people, this will be an issue.

I had never imagined that electric power was so complicated, but there is much more than just turning on the overhead light in the kitchen to start the day.

**THE VOTER IS BEGINNING A SERIES OF ARTICLES TO INFORM OUR MEMBERS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING THIS ISSUE SERIOUSLY AT THE LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL LEVELS....**

**Why you should care,**

No heat? No electricity? No running water?! Texas is still reeling from the deadly storm that shut off heat and water for millions of people. Whereas eastern New Mexico, Oklahoma, Mississippi and the Pacific Northwest recovered quickly. The storms closed roads, disrupted vaccine distribution in 20 states, and sent electricity and oil prices skyrocketing as a third of the nation's oil production shut down, gas lines froze, wind turbines stopped, and coal was disrupted. Much of it a result of poor planning, weak regulations, and the ever growing presence of climate change.

Expect more of these catastrophic weather episodes. Expect more of these cascading infrastructure collapses. They are being driven by climate change. Climate change is happening now, and it is happening right here:

New Mexico is the second fastest warming state in the nation. Texas and NM are already 4-6 F warmer on average.

Over half of the state is in "extreme" drought – ranchers have had to sell off herds they could no longer support. A fairly moderate short-term event pushed into the second worst drought across the southwest in 1,200 years. We are in the 20th year of that drought.

California's wildfire season has become year round and apocalyptic. Many have had to add wildfire insurance to their homeowner policies even in NM.

NM has taken a tremendous first step with the 2019 Energy Transition Act (ETA), requiring utilities and electric coops to produce 100% renewable electricity by 2050. In fact, we have the potential to produce the least expensive renewable energy in the nation. But we are a state that still derives a third of its income from oil and gas as the world is undergoing its third energy transition... away from fossil fuels. And we still emit 50 tons of carbon per capita every year versus a national average of 18 tons. So we have a lot to do. Quickly!

Number 1 on our list is to realize we have run out of time to sit and watch: We declare a climate emergency!

Next month, we roll up our sleeves with specifics to help our children and grandchildren have even a fighting chance for a livable planet..

Athena Christodoulou  
505-507-1955

**LWVSFC Proposal to Amend LWVNM’s Election Procedures Position – Spring 2021**

**By Chris Furlanetto**

Delegates to the 2019 LWVNM Convention considered adopting the following Board-recommended statement in the Election Procedures position: *Ranked-choice voting in all elections*. This was to replace the existing statement: *Amending the State Constitution to allow run-off elections in the case of non-partisan elections*. Delegates voted to reject the ranked-choice voting statement and to retain the run-off statement. Reasons given centered around lack of understanding of the ranked-choice process among League members and concerns about whether ranked-choice voting (RCV, also called instant-runoffs) has been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions. (See <https://www.lwvnm.org/BDocs/Minutes/2019/Convention2019.html>)

In 2018 Santa Fe initiated RCV; Las Cruces did the same in 2019. The LWVNM Board had adopted (March 2018) RCV language through concurrence with the LWV of Vermont. The word ‘statewide’ in the VT position was deleted by the LWVNM Board in May 2018. (See <https://www.lwvnm.org/BDocs/Minutes/2018/20180519.html>)

	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice	3 <sup>rd</sup> Choice	4 <sup>th</sup> Choice	5 <sup>th</sup> Choice
Betty Bear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felix Fox	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Lucinda Lizard	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roberto Rabbit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diego Deer	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**LWVVT Position In Brief:**

The League of Women Voters of Vermont (LWVVT) will support ranked choice voting for all statewide elections.

**Position History:**

approved 1999

"Instant Runoff Voting" is more often and more descriptively called "Ranked Choice Voting" in 2017. This position was reworded and reaffirmed at our state convention in 2017.

In accordance with the LWV's position of promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government, the LWVVT will support legislation that assures that the candidate preferred by a majority of voters wins the election.

Specifically, the LWVVT will support ranked choice voting (RCV) for all statewide elections.

At its Program Planning meeting 1/27/21, LWVSFC members asked that the ranked-choice voting statement be reconsidered at the 2021 Convention. To that end, LWVSFC plans to make a motion at the March 6 LWVNM Board meeting to adopt the ranked-choice statement in place of the current run-off statement and to include it as a recommended item at Convention in April.

To help League members understand RCV, LWVNM will be distributing information to local Leagues using materials from Common Cause. In addition, Mario Jimenez at Common Cause has offered to talk to the League(s) on RCV.

*For reference, the full current Election Procedures position is below:*

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports:

- 1.protection of the right of every citizen to vote;
- 2.verifiable and auditable procedures to guarantee the integrity of all statutory methods of voting in New Mexico;
- 3.funding to meet the requirements of the law and to serve the needs of the voters to ensure that elections are conducted accurately, fairly, and efficiently;
- 4.a centralized voter registration and election management system;
- 5.statewide uniformity in early voting for all elections;
- 6.an all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in the primary election, so that
  - a)voters who are not enrolled in a major political party may vote on one ballot per primary without having to enroll in that particular party; and
  - b)voters enrolled in a major political party can vote only on the ballot of their party;
- 1.more direct citizen involvement in the candidate selection process for special elections to fill a vacancy;
- 2.consolidation of elections in New Mexico;
- 3.methods that increase voter participation, including automatic voter registration and same-day voter registration;
- 4.systems that improve the election experience and provide ease of ballot access including vote-by-mail, supplemented by secure ballot drop boxes and accessible voting centers;
- 5.amending the State Constitution to allow run-off elections in the case of non-partisan elections.

An education/training materials are available. If you would like a copy, schedule training or have questions or comments, please contact Kelly Davis at [kdavis466@gmail.com](mailto:kdavis466@gmail.com).



## Remaining Nonpartisan in Hyper-partisan Times

By VIRGINIA KASE, CEO of The League of Women Voters of the United States

The League of Women Voters of the United States is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

So many issues today are framed in partisan terms that it can feel impossible to communicate at all without being accused of taking a side. “If you believe this, then you must be a progressive.” If you oppose that, then you align with conservatives.” being painted into ideological corners because of a stance our organization takes is not a new phenomenon, but it continues to be one that undermines a vibrant democracy: discussion, discourse, and listening to other points of view are what makes democracy work.

More than 100 years ago, the League of Women Voters of the U.S. was founded to be a nonpartisan voice for American women who wanted free, fair, and open elections, above all else. Our founders believed that voters must always have the facts, no matter how difficult those facts could be to accept, especially when it challenges one’s deeply held beliefs about a candidate or political party. Our founders were attacked for taking positions rooted in fact back then, and today, not much has changed. League leaders continue to face this challenge and often stand accused of being partisan for our efforts to advance democracy.

### ISSUES ARE NOT PARTISAN

The League’s advocacy work is issue based, and we arrive at our positions based on careful study and input from our members in communities across the country. We never derive our positions from politicians, and even when candidates or parties support the same issue, we never endorse them. Issues may evolve over the years, but our allegiance will always be first and foremost to the voters. If a party changes their position on an issue, that doesn’t mean the League has to change our position to remain neutral. And one politician taking a similar position to the League on any one issue does not make the issue or the League partisan.

However, in this hyper-partisan environment, political connections and assumption are made that simply aren’t accurate. Supporting the democratic processes of registering eligible voters and casting and counting ballots is seen by some as subverting one political party, even though these are sacred tools of our democracy. Likewise, empowering voters who previously have been left out of the process and supporting the anti-racism movement does not mean we are in alliance with one ideological segment of American government; rather, it means we are doing what we were founded to do: stand up for what is right.

Wanting every eligible voter to have equal access to the ballot box is not partisan. Wanting a robust democracy in which everyone has an equal voice and equal representation is not partisan. Wanting to see more elected officials that reflect the diverse makeup of our country is not partisan—it is American.

No party has a claim on any particular issue. Sometimes a candidate or political party agrees with our position—they may even champion them—but that doesn’t make the issue or the League partisan. We have seen an evolution of popular support and public opinion shift on issues over time, and the League has reevaluated and shifted priorities—but we have never compromised our values.

### NONPARTISAN DOES NOT MEAN APOLITICAL

In the hundred years of the League’s existence, we have endured challenges to our democratic principles, policies, and practices. We witnessed in live video the violation and prevention of rights to American citizens due to racial and structural inequities, and the growing anti-racism movement responding to it. We’ve observed the pandemic obstacles faced and overcome by our election processes, resulting in the secure, effective elections across the country.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in [the League of Women Voters of the United States] on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.



Continued on next page....

## REMAINING NON PARTISAN, continued....

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, passed by LWVUS members in 2020

League members are not a monolith. We represent opinions and positions that can be found across the American political spectrum. What brings us together is our commitment to voter empowerment—specially empowering women voters—and defending democracy. Standing up for these values is not a partisan narrative but a way to advance inclusion.

As we do this, we must ask ourselves and others within our election and democratic systems if we are walking the talk and prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion within our own organizations. Are we living our values, and are those values aligned with the ideals that we have as a country?

This self-reflection may be painful. It's difficult to acknowledge that actions taken in the past with the best of intentions may have been hurtful or undermined the values we claim to honor. It will require us to be open, transparent, and willing to admit when we are wrong.

### DEMOCRACY IS A CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE

Webster' definition of democracy:

a: government by the people especially: rule of the majority

b: a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.

Our mission to 'empower voters and defend democracy' has not changed in our 100 years. What has changed is the need to defend democracy, especially in the face of voter suppression. There is a wealth of misinformation out there that is aimed to divide us as a nation and undermine our democracy. We have to stand up to this attack on our democratic ideals, regardless of what some may say.

While it may be a challenge, especially at the state and local level, to avoid the appearance of partisanship when publicly addressing racial injustice in this heightened climate, we must. We may be accused of being partisan in those moments, but we must stand on the side of justice. It is our moral obligation to demand a more just and equitable world for people of color in our communities.

We will continue to uphold our nonpartisan values for fairness, justice, and equity because they form the foundation of our representative democracy. If we don't strive to dismantle and improve the systems and structures that exclude individuals from their democratic rights to vote and participate, we will never be able to achieve a "democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate."

Whether you identify politically as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, Libertarian, conservative, liberal, moderate, progressive or another political perspective, you have a place in this democracy and a place within the League, as long as you are committed to our belief in an inclusive democracy. While we may disagree on how we accomplish it, if you value democracy, then you must also value human rights, social justice, and equity.

### WE CAN BRIDGE THE PARTISAN DIVIDE

In 2020, we marked the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which afforded women in the United States the right to vote. However, even then, women of color were largely excluded from the movement that brought about the amendment. It wasn't until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that people of color could fully exercise their right to vote and our country began to reflect the values of all its people. We've made strides in the past 100 years, but we have so much more work to do, especially when it comes to fairness, justice, and equity for all. The League will continue to fight for the nonpartisan, anti-racism issues and policies we have worked to advance for a century. We will work to elevate more diverse voices from within our membership and our communities. With our partners, the League will strive to create a stronger, more inclusive, just, and equitable democracy for American voters— place where everyone has a voice.

As we move forward, we remain open to conversations about our history and the ways we can improve our democracy. Let's do this work together and make the next 100 years a century of real diversity, inclusion, and equity in American elections and democracy.



## NEW MEMBERS.....

Suzanne Helms  
4086 Mercury Circle SE  
Albuquerque, NM 87116-3024  
[Soozeq123@gmail.com](mailto:Soozeq123@gmail.com)  
(910) 616-0270





**WE NEED YOU!**

We have two Vice President level openings on our Board of Directors. Please consider getting involved and donating your time and talents to our organization.

**Position 1: Second Vice President.** The second vice president oversees membership activities and office management. Responsibilities include, publication of the membership handbook, member recruitment and orientation, maintaining the LWVCNM data base and leadership development within the organization.

**Position 2: Fourth Vice President.** The fourth vice president is in charge of fund raising and long-range planning/development for the LWVCNM. Coordinating regular fund-raising events and maintaining relations with donors. Also updating the league's long-range planning documents.

If you would like more information on these positions, we invite you to contact Donna Rigano at or (505) 899-0910 or Karen Wentworth at or (505) 263-9066.

Jamal Greene & Alicia Bannon

## How Rights Went Wrong with Jamal Greene

March 25, 2021

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET



The League works closely with the Brennan Center for Justice. This is a webinar that you will find interesting. Check out their website at [brennan-center.org](http://brennan-center.org) for a lot of other useful information about voting.

How is it that corporations have the right to spend unlimited sums in our elections, but a Black defendant has no right to a death penalty ruling free of racial bias? Why does a company have the right to sell private prescription data, but marginalized children don't have the right to an adequate public education?

According to constitutional scholar Jamal Greene, it's because our courts "flatten textured rights conflicts" into binary, all-or-nothing questions with clear winners and losers. In his new book, *How Rights Went Wrong: Why Our Obsession with Rights Is Tearing America Apart*, Greene argues that courts should reconcile competing rights, not discriminate between them. In a conversation with the Brennan Center's Alicia Bannon, he'll discuss how the United States became so "rightsist," and how we can shift this paradigm to truly ensure justice, once and for all.

**BRENNAN  
CENTER  
FOR JUSTICE**

**SPEAKERS**

- Jamal Greene, Dwight Professor of Law, Columbia University Law School; Author, *How Rights Went Wrong: Why Our Obsession with Rights Is Tearing America Apart*

- MODERATOR: Alicia Bannon, Managing Director, Democracy Program, Brennan Center for Justice.

Register online at [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1516141841329/WN\\_LWB4FiJTSzK\\_RDoquzFXpQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1516141841329/WN_LWB4FiJTSzK_RDoquzFXpQ)



2501 San Pedro Dr. NE, Suite 216  
Albuquerque, NM 87110

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico, a tax-exempt 501 (c ) (3) organization is a nonpartisan political organization, that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy by education and advocacy.

\*\*\*\*\*

### APPLICATION FOR LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail above information to LWVCNM, 2501 San Pedro Dr. NE, Suite 216, Albuquerque, NM 87110 along with annual dues as follows:

- |                                     |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| First member of household           | \$65 |
| Each additional member of household | \$33 |
| Student member (proof required)     | \$12 |