The VOTER

SEPTEMBER 2023

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO 6739 Academy Rd. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109 lwvcnm.org (505) 884-8441

LWVCNM Updates & Happenings Jennifer Black

Join us for the Brown Bag LUNCH & LEARN Series



VOL 88, NO.9

PROGRAM DETAILS:

- -- LWVCNM Conference Room, 6739 Academy Road NE (ample lot parking)
- -- In-person and via Zoom/Watch for the Topics announcement with Zoom login information.
- -- Attendees are invited to bring a brown bag lunch
- -- Stay for a social gathering after the program with light refreshments hosted by LWVCNM Board
- -- In-Person RSVP appreciated: <u>lunch@lwvcnm.org</u> or 505-881-8441
- -- With the return to in-person meetings, program may extend past 1 PM. Extended time gives members an opportunity to engage more extensively with the speakers. Please feel free to leave each program at 1 PM if you have other commitments.

SEPTEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING

TOPIC: Albuquerque Community Safety Department: The Right Response at the Right Time

<u>What</u>: The Albuquerque Community Safety Department is the newest branch of the city's 911emergency response system.

The Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS) is a new alternative response model gaining national attention, garnering recent coverage by NPR, the Washington Post, NBC and other national media outlets. ACS is one of the first of its kind. As a cabinet-level department, it is the third branch of public safety, meaning it is on equal footing with the police and fire departments. ACS addresses calls involving mental health, homelessness, substance use, and other issues that do not require a paramedic or police officer. Calls are triaged by 911 and 311 operators, ensuring ACS's calls are non-medical and non-violent.

<u>Who</u>: Deputy Director, Jasmine Desiderio, see bio below, will speak about the department's mission and accomplishments in its first two years of operation. She will address challenges and goals for the future.

When: Thursday, September 14th @ Noon-1 PM

In-Person RSVP appreciated: <u>lunch@lwvcnm.org</u> or 505-881-8441

Where: -- LWVCNM Conference Room, 6739 Academy Road NE, and via ZOOM

SPEAKER BIO: Jasmine Desiderio MA, Deputy Director Albuquerque Community Safety Department

Jasmine Desiderio previously served as the Project Director of a Native American Youth Suicide Prevention program, where her roles included strategic action planning, policymaking, program development and evaluation, community outreach and engagement, data surveillance, grant



administration and training facilitation. Desiderio brings eight years of experience in coordinating multidisciplinary, interservice and interagency teams to strategically design and implement injury prevention services ranging from crisis intervention, suicide prevention and postvention programs in northwestern New Mexico. She is currently in the Organization, Information and Learning Sciences Ph.D. program at the University of New Mexico where her research interest focuses on applying innovative methods of human performance technology, organizational development, and evaluation research to address adversities amongst marginalized populations.

October and November programs will be a two-part series: Municipal Elections 2023, Issues, and Answers

NEW! LWVCNM BOOK CLUB

Join us for the third meeting of the League Book Club and a chance to share ideas with other League members. While it is great to finish a book selection, if you run out of time, please feel free to attend and follow along the discussion. Book Club coordinators, Janet Kirkpatrick, Mary Mulvany, and Laura Downing, invite you for lively discussion and conversation.

Bring along a "potluck" snack--something sweet or savory--to share with the group (*not required; just if you have the time*).

- Date: Wednesday, October 25, 2023
- **Time:** 5:30 7:30 p.m.
- Location: LWVCNM Office Conference Room, 6739 Academy Road NE (ample lot parking)
- **Title:** The Persuaders At the Front Lines of the Fight for Hearts, Minds, and Democracy by best-selling author Anand Giridharadas:

As described on the author's website, "The *Persuaders* is a stunning insider account of activists, politicians, educators, and everyday citizens who are on the



ground working to change minds, bridge divisions, and fight for democracy. "

Please RSVP to Janet via phone or text at 505-401-2052.

Missed the first two meetings? Catch up at any time with previous book selections:

- Evicted Poverty and Profit in The American City by Matthew Desmond.
- The Soul of America The Battle for our Better Angels by Pulitzer Prize Winner Jon Meacham.

National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) Volunteers Needed!

The LWVCNM is participating in the Bernalillo County NVRD event, a nationwide, nonpartisan effort to register hundreds of thousands of voters on <u>Tuesday</u>, <u>September 19th</u>. The League will be out in force at Alvarado Square, 415 Silver Ave, SW, Albuquerque, NM from 10 am – 2 pm under a nice shade structure providing election information about the upcoming municipal election and assisting voters who want to register or update their registration if they have moved.

All volunteers, VRAs, and members wanting to represent LWVCNM to our community are welcomed to join.

Candidate Forum Volunteers Needed!

The LWVCNM is also gearing up to support several candidate forums this September and October. Don't sit on the sidelines of democracy, get involved! We cannot sponsor candidate forums without your help!

Please leave a message at the LWVCNM office (505) 884-8441, or contact Gina Mahfouz or Mary H Smith at <u>maryhenrie@msn.com</u> if you would like to help with these forums.

New moderators? You're up! Let them know if you want training resources or if you have questions. Need a forum refresher? Please see the recorded forum training here: <u>https://youtu.be/ZPTkfPirhRk</u>

Specifically, LWVCNM has been asked to host two Albuquerque City Council candidate forums.

The <u>ABQ Council District 8</u> will be held **Thursday September 28th - at 6:15 pm at the Holiday Park** Community Center, 11710 Comanche Rd NE, 87111

The <u>ABQ Council District 6</u> will be an in-person forum held **Tuesday**, **October 17**th **at a TBA location in Nob Hill**.

Needed are volunteers to staff these forums as:

1. moderators

- 2. timekeepers
- 3. question organizers

Thank you for helping with this critical LWV voter education effort!

NM Supreme Court's redistricting decision provides a victory for fair democracy

-by Hannah Burling, Fair Districts for New Mexico, July 6, 2023



State's highest court holds that Republican claims can proceed under legal standard proposed by U.S. Supreme Court's liberal justices

Wednesday's New Mexico Supreme Court ruling provides needed guidance on how a lower court should consider a case alleging unconstitutional partisan gerrymandering. Instead of declining to have New Mexico courts review redistricting maps for partisan gerrymandering, the court offered guidance to the state's Fifth District Court on how to gauge if New Mexico's newest congressional district map is fair. In a cross-partisan

twist, the court deployed a standard authored by one of the U.S. Supreme Court's more liberal justices to advise Clovis District Judge Fred Van Soelen how to assess the Republicans' claims of unfairness.

"Some people are declaring yesterday's decision a victory for New Mexico Republicans, who are challenging in court the state's redrawn congressional map," said Hannah Burling co-President of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico and Project Leader of Fair Districts for New Mexico. "But no one knows what the final decision on that question will be. Instead, yesterday's decision is a victory for voters who believe the courts can – and must – protect voters' constitutional rights by considering cases alleging partisan gerrymandering."

In its ruling, the New Mexico Supreme Court said that claims of partisan gerrymandering under the state constitution are reviewable by the state courts. This differs from the current U.S. Supreme Court doctrine that held that federal courts cannot decide constitutional challenges to partisan gerrymanders.

"The New Mexico Supreme Court order signals the importance of courts being fair and impartial, by upholding the state constitution and laws unconstrained by political pressure, uninfluenced by the status of the parties—essentially deciding the case on its merits without fear or favor," said former New Mexico Supreme Court Chief Justice Edward Chavez. "This does not mean that the underlying case has merit, it means that the checks and balances of our democracy are alive and well in New Mexico."

Heather Balas, Vice President of the Election Reformers Network, pointed out that the New Mexico Supreme Court's order positions the state to be an example nationally. "What makes this ruling so fascinating is that the state court adopted a standard offered by the liberal wing of the U.S. Supreme Court to advise a Clovis judge how to assess Republican claims of partisan gerrymandering. It is a case study in nonpartisanship," said Balas. "Further, New Mexico's court rightly joins a growing number of other state supreme courts in holding what the U.S. Supreme Court once recognized and what every voter knows to be true: that extreme partisan gerrymandering is incompatible with democratic principles and causes constitutional harms. Such cases must be at least heard."

Mason Graham, Policy Director for Common Cause New Mexico noted that New Mexicans deserve a fair and transparent process for redistricting. "This process was flawed from the outset. When elected officials from either party meet in secret to manipulate maps and protect their political power, voters lose faith in our institutions and in democracy itself. In that way, gerrymandering harms us all. Ensuring the courts retain the power to protect the interests of voters is an essential safeguard." The newly adopted standard that the NM Supreme Court ordered the district court to adopt comes from Justice Kagen's dissent in Rucho v. Common Cause. Burling said, "As New Mexicans we are proud that on the day following Independence Day, the New Mexico Supreme Court affirmed the balance of power enshrined in our state constitution and respected by the U.S. Constitution. This is not a win for any political party; this is a victory for all New Mexicans."

About Fair Districts New Mexico

Fair Districts New Mexico is a statewide coalition convened by the League of Women Voters of New Mexico. It is comprised of over 40 organizations that support fair, transparent and trusted redistricting following the 2020 census. Its primary policy goal is to see New Mexico establish an independent redistricting commission. New Mexico redistricting information is available at <u>www.fairdistrictsnm.org</u> and RedistrictNM.org

CONTACT: Hannah Burling, Fair Districts for New Mexico, hannahburling@gmail.com 505/603-1601



APD Forward: Civilian Police Oversight Agency Events September 2023 Karen M. Douglas

The APD Forward Coalition meeting with Executive Assistant US Attorney Aja Brooks on 7/20/23 included representatives from the ACLU, Disability Rights NM, La Mesa Presbyterian Church, and LWVCNM. Ms. Brooks is assigned to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Community Outreach to residents experiencing violence; Community Policing Councils (CPCs), Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC), Civilian Police Oversight Agency (CPOA), AMICI (APD Forward, Community Coalition, and McClendon Subclass) and Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS). The DOJ will ensure that Consent Decree Community Outreach provisions are institutionalized before leaving Albuquerque.

Additionally, the External Force Investigation Team will conclude their involvement with the APD Training Academy and APD Internal Affairs Investigations (contract ends 2024) prior to US DOJ Consent Decree closure. DOJ is currently evaluating the APD Crisis Intervention approach and participating in APD and ACS (Albuquerque Community Safety Department) Ride-alongs. Over 50% of APD Officers are ECIT (Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team)-certified and these officers respond to 82% of calls for service, resulting in fewer officer-involved shootings. All APD officer-involved shootings resulting in death are referred to the US DOJ.

DOJ/CABQ Consent Decree negotiations proceed as joint motions before the court. The DOJ meets with CABQ weekly. Updates to the Civilian Police Oversight Agency will follow Independent Monitor Team/Dr. Rickman's August visit to Albuquerque for CABQ discussion of the Contract Compliance Director hiring CPOA Executive Director and Data Analyst. The Albuquerque City Council had decreased the number of CPOA Board members from 9 to 5 during their 2023 meetings – the CPOA is required by Consent Decree.

DOJ Listening Sessions

The US Attorney for the District of NM, Alexander Uballez, was confirmed May 2022 and was previously involved with the DOJ Project Safe Neighborhoods Task Force including those of Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Espanola, and the Indian Country Public Housing Safety Initiative. Uballez, Executive Assistant US Attorney Aja Brooks, and other DOJ staff members conducted these Listening Sessions with organizations and individuals to discuss safety concerns with emphasis on violent crime and gun safety. Starlyn Brown and Karen Douglas attended the 8/1/23 session representing LWVCNM which also involved residents of Martinez Town and the International District. Additionally, representatives of the US Attorney's office planned to attend the 8/1/23 National Night Out events in multiple neighborhoods throughout Albuquerque discussing residents' concerns.

LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Donna Sandoval

1st Co-Vice Presidents/Vote411.org: Karen Wentworth & Lani Desaulniers

2nd Vice President/Membership: Elizabeth Shields

3rd Vice President/Program: Jennifer Black

4th Co-Vice Presidents/Development: Betsy Carlson & Mary Mulvany

> *Treasurer:* Donna Sandoval

Secretary: Vivian Skadron

Voter Services Chair: Gina Mahfouz

Voter Guide Distribution: Lani Desaulniers

Sustainability/Climate Change: Jeanne Logsdon

Office Manager/Webmaster/Zoom Host: Starlyn Brown

Advocacy Team/Observer Corps: Karen Wentworth

Directors Terry Quinn & Lindsey Ritcher

Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator Linda Miller

> Program Karen Douglas

If you need help with Zoom, please reach out to Zoom host, Starlyn Brown, <u>sbrown@unm.edu</u>

Please submit your articles for the monthly Voter by the 15th of each month to Michal Mudd at: <u>VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com</u>

LWVCNM CALENDAR

September 14th (Thursday) NOON - 1 PM

LWVCNM Monthly meeting, In-person & via Zoom

TOPIC: Albuquerque Community Safety Department: The Right Response at the Right Time Speaker: Jasmine Desiderio MA, Deputy Director Albuquerque Community Safety Dept.

Tuesday, Septemeber 19th 10 am – 2 pm Voter Registration Day, Alvarado Square, 415 Silver Ave. SW, downtown ABQ, (see pg. 3)

Thursday September 28th - at 6 pm, Holiday Park CC ABQ Council District 8 Candidate Forum

> (October & November will be a 2-part series: Municipal Elections 2023, Issues, and Answers)

October 12th (Thursday) NOON - 1 PM

LWVCNM Monthly meeting, In-person & via Zoom

TOPIC: Municipal Elections 2023, Part One: The Issues General Overview of upcoming elections and the major issues facing the electorate. Speaker: Dr. Timothy Krebs, Professor of Political Science, University of New Mexico

Tuesday, October 17th evening, TBA <u>ABQ Council District 6</u> Candidate Forum, Nob Hill

Tuesday, November 7th - ELECTION DAY

November 9th (Thursday) NOON - 1 PM

LWVCNM Monthly meeting, In-person & via Zoom

Topic: Municipal Elections 2023, Part Two: The Answers With Speaker: Maggie Toulouse Oliver, New Mexico Secretary of State

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting

August 7, 2023 (The City Council does not meet during July)

Mary Mulvany /Janet Kirkpatrick

Eight of the nine councilors were present at the August 7, 2023 meeting. Trudy Jones (District 8) was excused. The meeting did not include votes on any hot issues. However, there were a few items of interest that came up during the Administration Question and Answer section:

- North Domingo Baca Aquatic Center. An indoor/outdoor aquatic center is planned for the North Domingo Baca Park area of northeast Albuquerque. Preliminary plans can be viewed at <u>https://www.northdomingobacaaquaticcenter.com/</u> Although the project website run by Citizens for NDB Aquatic Center mentions delays, the city's Chief Administrative Officer Rael indicated that a ribbon cutting ceremony to begin the project is expected around August 31.
- United Stadium at/near Balloon Fiesta Park. Councilor Bassan asked the city administration if there would be public meetings with neighborhood associations near the proposed stadium. Chief Administrative Officer Rael responded that Balloon Fiesta Park's master plan must be amended for the United Stadium to be built there. The amendment process includes meetings with the public. At this point the city has been working on a site plan and gathering information from traffic, noise, and lighting studies. The goal is to have pre-development meetings with affected neighborhoods "within 7-8 days." It was unclear if he meant 7-8 days from the August 7 council meeting or 7-8 days from the end of the site planning process.
- Cameras Connected to Real Time Crime Center. Councilor Grout asked how many cameras are connected to APD's Real Time Crime Center. The APD representative indicated that there are 9000 cameras connected to the system. The cameras belong to the City of Albuquerque, the NM Department of Transportation, Albuquerque Public Schools, and private entities. He further stated the Community Connect program has two ways to participate:
 - 1. Private residences can register the location of their surveillance cameras. Officers may request footage if a crime is committed in that area.
 - 2. Businesses can integrate their cameras via live stream with the Real Time Crime Center. More information is available at APD's website <u>Albuquerque Community Connect</u>.

Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative – Update. None. There was no action or discussion at the August 7 meeting regarding the Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative. The status remains unchanged: on June 30 the Mayor Keller signed the resolution passed by the City Council on an eight to one vote approving the Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County establishing the Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative. Voting for: Benton, Davis, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Jones, Lewis, Pena, Sanchez; voting against: Bassan. <u>R-23-144 Text</u>



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission AUGUST 2023

Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Considering Changes to Transparency Portal

The Bernalillo County commission is considering removing the names of county employees from the county's Transparency Portal. Currently you can look at the website to find the names of employees who do various jobs in the county. But problems with scammers targeting county employees using their job descriptions is driving the county to consider removing the names.

Other proposed changes might be more problematic. The commission is considering language that would limit public access to contracts. The county currently posts the complete contract language. The proposed change is "Contracts which could compromise the safety and security of the county will not be included in the contract listing." The complete contract language would still be available to the public, but would require a public records request.

The state league has an extensive position on government transparency. Part of our formal position says: "Use this government website as a repository for searchable budget and financial records, including operating budgets, expenditures over a specified amount, checks/warrants and any other budget and financial information made available to the governing body. These data should be in a non-proprietary format that maximizes the public's ability to download and analyze data."

The proposed language changes have not yet been voted on. That vote should come in early September.



Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

July 26, 2023

Mary Templeton, (by online audio; video is unavailable)

Present: David Heil (Chair), Michael Meek (Vice Chair), Katherine Bruch, Jay Block, Joshua Jones

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Economic Growth and Housing

In an update from the Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA), the need for more housing came up as one reason that Sandoval County ranks in the bottom 25% for job growth among 60 cities of similar size nationwide.

Polling Places for the 2024 and 2025 Election Cycles

The Commission passed a resolution designating 34 approved ADA-compliant polling locations for statewide elections in 2024 and 2025 in Sandoval County. Four previous polling places are no longer available within the County, leaving Rio Rancho with nine locations (down from 12). The City would like

to have a minimum of 15 locations. As the County finds additional locations, it will amend the resolution. In addition to polling places, the County will place one drop box outside the Sandoval County Government Complex.

Additional Comments

Free-Roaming Horses

On May 24th, the commission passed an ordinance to halt public feeding of free-roaming horses in Placitas and a permitting resolution allowing 501c3s to apply for a permit to feed and water. Public comments at the July 26th meeting included founders of three 501c3s who pointed out that none of the existing organizations have capacity to care for additional horses in excess of those they care for currently. They urged the commission to open the permitting process to the public.

Commissioners Discussion

One commissioner suggested that the military is having trouble meeting their recruitment targets due to transfeminine military personnel taking showers.

(https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/267923 3:14:25).

He went on to denounce transgender youth in sports. Another commissioner responded by pushing back against villainizing LGBTQ people.

Meeting Materials

OBSERVER

The full agenda ordinarily includes links to supporting documents. These are absent for this meeting. Materials now include a meeting transcript.

Sandoval County Commission Website

https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/

Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

August 9, 2023

Mary Templeton, (by online audio; video is unavailable)

Present: David Heil (Chair), Michael Meek (Vice Chair), Katherine Bruch, Jay Block (video)

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Polling Places for the 2024 and 2025 Election Cycles

The County Clerk's team has amended the resolution to designate 39 approved ADA-compliant polling locations for statewide elections in 2024 and 2025 in Sandoval County. It includes 20 early voting sites. The resolution passed unanimously.

Additional Comments

Commissioners Discussion

One commissioner asserted that New Mexico public schools are sending sex ed surveys to third and fourth graders and telling them not to tell their parents about them. (https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/268881 1:49:10).

Meeting Materials

The full agenda once again includes links to supporting documents, but access is now denied when following the links.

Sandoval County Commission Website

https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/



LWVCNM Observer Report Update for City of Albuquerque Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)

July 18, 2023

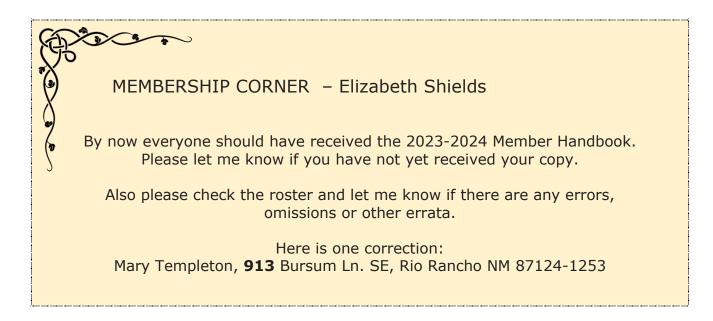
Lani Desaulniers

Open public meetings are held monthly (currently on Zoom). Meeting links, with the agenda and minutes are posted on the <u>MHRAC website</u>.

Dr. Peter Vielehr, Director of Analytics from APD, presented a detailed summary of contacts for • Behavioral Health Incidents provided by the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) in 2022. During the course of the year, more calls were diverted to ACS. A detailed review of CIT calls that resulted in use of force provided. Presentation slides be viewed was can at https://www.cabq.gov/police/documents/ciu 2022 annual report final.pdf

Updates from the August 15, 2023 meeting included:

- Smart 911 Service: Albuquerque has initiated a contract with a company (<u>Smart911</u>) which allows residents to enter information into a database (linked to their phone number) that is accessible to dispatch operators when a 911 call is made. Information is otherwise stored in a secure database. Any information provided is completely voluntary, but could include information about a person's disability (hearing, vision, intellectual), psychiatric diagnosis, advanced directives, etc. that might be helpful to first responders.
- Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) Report:
 - The department plans to roll out 24/7 services beginning on August 26th. Staff working the night shifts will be equipped with reflective vests, additional lighting sources, as well as emergency lighting for themselves and their vehicles.
 - ACS received notice last week they have been awarded a \$2-million Department of Justice Discretionary Project Grant to support their work.
- <u>Gateway Center at Gibson Health Hub:</u> The 50 residential bed unit for women has now officially opened. They will be providing comprehensive services to these individuals on site with the overall goal of helping them find a stable housing situation.





League Archive Material in New Exhibit at the Albuquerque Museum -Karen Wentworth

Don't forget to plan a visit the new exhibit currently at the Albuquerque Museum, "News for the People: Local Journalism the 1970's and Beyond," which features items from the Central New Mexico League archives! The exhibit will run through March 3, 2024.

The exhibit contains Voter Guides local newspapers printed in conjunction with the League, and leaflets in English and Spanish that League members created to help new mothers with day care questions.

Volunteer Opportunities

s.

Because Democracy is not a Spectator Sport....

We need your skills, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to the myriad of projects always underway. From simple clerical tasks to grass roots advocacy, ongoing or project-by project, we can fit your interests to a volunteer job. Expanding our volunteer base is a top priority of LWVCNM.

How to Find Out More About Volunteering?

It's easy: **Contact us at 505-884-8441** or <u>lwvcnmoffice@gmail.com</u> Leave a message with your name/phone number and expressing your interest in finding out more about volunteering. We will contact you to match your interests/skills with a volunteer position, explain tasks involved, review time commitment for various positions, and offer training where needed.

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.

