

The VOTER

DECEMBER 2023

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

Don't Forget!!

the Celebrate the Season Holiday Open House!

Enjoy an afternoon with League friends and colleagues at a holiday celebration at the home of LWVCNM President Donna Sandoval. Share light refreshments, conversation, and hear of our latest accomplishments, news, and plans for the future!



*Sunday, December 3rd 2 - 4 PM
6729 Promenade Ave. NE, Albuquerque*

*RSVP: Liz Shields 559-578-5670 or
elizs44@yahoo.com*



And

Albuquerque City Council District 6 Regular Local Election Runoff

EARLY VOTING:

Five Early Voting Convenience Centers will be open Nov. 21, 2023 – Dec. 9, 2023, Mon. – Sat., 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Completed absentee ballots may be turned in to any of these locations during early voting. The LWVCNM website has a link to the Bernalillo County Clerk's list of early voting sites.

ELECTION DAY VOTING:

Ten Election Day Voting Convenience Centers will be open Tuesday, Dec. 12th from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Completed absentee ballots may be turned in to any of these locations on this day. The LWVCNM website also has a link to the Bernalillo County Clerk's list of election day voting sites.

DECEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING

WHEN: THURSDAY, DEC. 14th - 2 MEETING TIMES - 12-1 PM & 6:30-7:30 PM

WHERE: Zoom ONLY

TOPIC: **NUCLEAR ISSUES CONSENSUS TOPICS -
Clean Energy Options – Should LWV Include Commercial Nuclear Power?
An In-depth Exploration of the Nuclear Study**

SPEAKERS: LWVNM Nuclear Study Task Leaders Panel, coordinated by Karen Douglas, LWVCNM

The two December 14th LWVCNM Zoom meetings will be an opportunity for members statewide to address questions to the four Nuclear Issues Task Chairs (George Chandler/LWVLA, Kathy Brook/LWVSNM, Jeanne Logsdon/LWVCNM, and Karen Douglas/LWVNM Nuclear Issues Director) prior to the December Consensus meetings on December 16th at 1pm and December 19th at 6pm. Each meeting is being held twice to engage more members in the discussion.

Background: During the June 2022 LWVUS Convention in Denver, LWVPA recommended a Nuclear Issues Resolution promoting commercial nuclear power as a greenhouse-gas free alternative to support the LWVUS Climate Emergency Declaration. LWVUS did not accept the resolution and instead recommended that a state-level Nuclear Issues study followed by Position development for concurrence with other states commence to revise the current LWVUS Nuclear Issues Position.

During the LWVUS Convention LWVNM also learned that 34 other state leagues were interested in revisiting the LWVUS Nuclear Issues Position which “opposes increased reliance on nuclear fission.” Following Summer and Fall 2022 zoom meetings, including participants from other states, LWVNM again requested LWVUS clarification. LWVNM then initiated a state-level study with a study proposal introduction during Winter 2023 LWVCNM Program Planning. The Nuclear Issues study proposal was revised and approved by LWVNM Convention delegates April 2023 and includes four Tasks:

1. Summarize the current contribution nuclear energy provides as both a baseload and a greenhouse gas free source for domestic/international energy production.
2. Identify deterrents to nuclear energy expansion and any proven and effective remedies (consider the LWVNM Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage Safety Position adopted in 2021).
3. Consider the current U.S. energy situation and domestic nuclear plant status including closures with related impacts on states.
4. Evaluate newer advanced reactor concepts with enhanced safety features and efficiency with related implementation status.

Following a 6-month study effort, results are now available for LWVNM member consideration and members are invited to access the Nuclear Issues folders containing Study Reports with references and recordings for the four 2023 interviews with Nuclear Industry Experts. LWVNM sent an email on November 22nd via Constant Contact to league members. The email contains links to the 4 study task reports and recordings. If you **did not receive the email**, please contact the LWVCNM office by phone or email and it will be forwarded to you.

Thereafter, two LWVNM Nuclear Issues Consensus meetings, both via Zoom, will follow during December 2023: Saturday, December 16th at 1:00 pm and Tuesday, December 19th 6:00 pm.

Registration for Consensus meetings will be available early December and all LWVNM members are encouraged to participate at their preferred time. Results of the Consensus meetings will be used to formulate the January 2024 LWVNM Nuclear Issues Position.

JANUARY EDUCATIONAL MEETING

As we reengage in the new year, the January educational meeting will be held Thursday, January 11th from Noon-1 PM. This will be a Hybrid in-person and Zoom meeting.

Note: The January meeting has historically been a legislative review by Dick Mason, but the State League will be coordinating a statewide legislative review in 2024- so we are free to host a new topic. January and February will instead host a two-part series on Homeless/Housing Issues. January's is:

Topic/Title: [A Place to Call Home When You Don't Have One, Can't Afford One, or Can't Find One: Affordable Housing/Homelessness and Regional Plans to Address the Issue, Part One.](#)

Proposed Speaker: Joseph Montoya from Family and Community Services

LCVCNM BOOK CLUB

The book club kicks off 2024 with a recent New York Times bestselling publication from historian Heather Cox Richardson, known for her daily blog Letters from an American.

Title: Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America

Author: Heather Cox Richardson

Date: January 31, 2024 (Wednesday) 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Place: To Be Determined

Per Boston College's review Professor Richardson's book examines the long, intricate path to today's fraught, dysfunctional American political state of affairs.

The book is ranked #4 on the New York Times' bestseller list. The Rio Rancho Public Library owns 1 copy; the Albuquerque Public Library system has 5 copies on order.

LWVCNM TOPICS EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

With many of our members submitting suggestions for non-League events to be posted via the LWVCNM TOPICS email, a LWVCNM members-only listserv, a new policy has been adopted to standardize our decisions on what is appropriate to post.

Please review the new policy carefully and make sure that an event you would like to post fits these parameters before sending for review.

Please note: in an effort not to clutter our members' mailboxes, we may also briefly hold an announcement to space out LWVCNM TOPICS postings.

Publicizing Non-League Events Policy

(Adopted November 2, 2023)

The LWVCNM may publicize the events of other organizations, as long as

- there is no cost or encouragement to donate;
- the events are strictly limited to issues that are aligned with a League position;
- the organization is strictly nonpartisan; and
- the decision is approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of LWVCNM.

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:

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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,
sbrown@unm.edu

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

LWVCNM CALENDAR

Sunday, December 3rd 2 – 4 pm

Holiday Open House Gathering

@ home of Donna Sandoval,

6729 Promenade Ave. NE

See p.1 for details to RSVP

NO Happy Hour or Book Club in December

December 7th, (first Thursday) 5:30 pm

LWVCNM Board Meeting, via ZOOM ONLY.

All members welcome.

December 12th, (Tuesday)

**Runoff Election Day, ABQ City Council District 6,
see p. 1 for info on early and day of voting.**

December 14th (Thursday) 12 - 1 pm & 6:30 – 7:30 pm

LWVCNM Monthly meetings, via Zoom ONLY

**Topic: Clean Energy Options – Should LWV Include
Commercial Nuclear Power? An In-depth Exploration of
the Nuclear Study, organized by Karen Douglas. will
feature Task Leaders discussing study results and
responding to member inquiries.**

**December 16th (Saturday) 1pm & December 19th
(Tuesday) 6pm**

**LWVNM Consensus Meetings, via Zoom ONLY
offered two times (Noon & 6:30 pm) discussing study
consensus questions.**

See article on p. 2 for further info.

January 4th (first Thursday) 5:30 pm

**LWVCNM Board Meeting, Hybrid LWVCNM office
conference room/ZOOM. All members welcome.**

Jan. 11th (Thursday). 12 – 1 pm

**LWVCNM Monthly meeting, hybrid in-person, Zoom
The first in a two-part series on
Homeless/Housing Issues.**

**Topic/Title: A Place to Call Home When You Don't
Have One, Can't Afford One, or Can't Find One:
Affordable Housing/Homelessness and
Regional Plans to Address the Issue, Part One.
Speaker Joseph Montoya, Family and Community
Services**

January 31st (Wednesday) 5:30 – 7:30 pm

LWVCNM Book Club Location: TBD



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

On 10/27/23 it was announced by US DOJ Asst Atty Aja Brooks that Dr. Ginger, Independent Monitor, agreed to greatly reduce the # Consent Decree paragraphs reported quarterly by >50 due to continued, sustained APD Compliance (the 2014 Consent Decree between the City of Albuquerque and US DOJ includes 276 measurable paragraphs requiring quarterly reporting). Paragraph 302 of the Consent Decree authorizes this transition. The Department of Justice (USA) and the City of Albuquerque filed a Joint Motion 10/27/23 for Partial Termination of the Consent Decree with current compliance levels:

- Primary (policies in place) compliance findings at 100%
- Secondary (PO Training to policies) compliance findings at 100%
- Operational (PO Field performance) compliance at a new high of 92%

The 3 Amici were invited to meet with the DOJ for further discussion, if desired, and the Community Coalition led by former UNM Law School Dean Alfred Matthewson requested a meeting. The Community Coalition represents disadvantaged minorities in Albuquerque who may be more frequent targets of police violence. The remaining two Amici, APD Forward (LWVCNM is a Coalition member) and McClendon Subclass (which represents Metropolitan Detention Center inmates and families) have not requested further discussion at present.

Executive Assistant US Attorney Aja Brooks announced November 13th that the Federal Hearing addressing the quarterly Independent Monitor Report #18 is tentatively scheduled for December 4, 2023. The quarterly hearings are usually full day events and have been offered as Hybrid opportunities since the Pandemic. Those attending the Federal Hearing would hear testimony from Independent Monitor Ginger and staff, both local and US Headquarters DOJ Civil Justice Division attorneys, the City of Albuquerque Attorney, APD leadership, Albuquerque Police Officers Association counsel (Union representatives), and AMICI representatives expressing interest.



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting
16 October and 8 November 2023
Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick

All nine councilors were present at the October 16th and November 8th meetings: Louie Sanchez – District 1, Isaac Benton – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Pat Davis – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Trudy Jones – District 8, Renée Grout, District 9.

United Soccer Stadium Lease at Balloon Fiesta Park

At the October 16th meeting the City Council considered whether to approve a lease agreement allowing the United soccer team to build a stadium at Balloon Fiesta Park. Fifteen members of the community spoke in favor of the lease agreement, while 5 spoke against it. Members of the City Council expressed concern that input had not been solicited from neighbors or the Balloon Fiesta Commission. There was

additional discussion of whether lease approval was premature considering that much of the land use process had not been completed. The City Council voted unanimously to defer consideration of the measure until the November 20th meeting. [EC-375](#)

Air Quality Control Board

At the November 8th meeting Councilor Lewis proposed an ordinance (O-23-88) to revamp the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board, changing it from an independent board to one more closely controlled by the City Council. There were many members of the community who spoke about the bill. Thirty individuals, including industry representatives, spoke in favor of the ordinance. Fifty people spoke against the ordinance, some citing a concern that the timing of this change was to circumvent the Board's upcoming consideration of cumulative health impacts. The ordinance passed by a vote of five in favor (Bassan, Grout, Jones, Lewis, Sanchez) to four opposed (Benton, Davis, Fiebelkorn, Peña). A link to the ordinance: [O-23-88](#)

At the November 8th meeting Councilor Lewis proposed a resolution (R-23-176) which establishes a moratorium for the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board to act until February 2, 2024. The measure passed by a vote of five in favor (Bassan, Grout, Jones, Lewis, Sanchez) to four opposed (Benton, Davis, Fiebelkorn, Peña). A link to the resolution: [R-23-173](#)

Transit

During the administration question and answer period of the October 16th meeting it was disclosed that all ABQ Ride routes are now operating reduced schedules.

At the November 8th meeting, Councilors Fiebelkorn, Davis, and Peña proposed an ordinance (O-23-89) to make permanent zero fares on all buses, ART, and SunVan. The ordinance passed by a vote of six in favor (Bassan, Benton, Davis, Fiebelkorn, Jones, Peña) to three opposed (Grout, Lewis, Sanchez). A link to the ordinance: [O-23-89](#)



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

October/November 2023

Karen Wentworth

Legislative Priorities, Money for Runoff Election, and Continuing Problems at UNMH

The Bernalillo County Commission has approved \$1.2 million dollars to fund the Albuquerque City Council runoff election in Council District 6. Election day is scheduled for December 12th. Early voting is already in progress.

The county commission also raised eyebrows when it only allowed three state legislators a minute apiece to comment on county priorities for the 2024 legislative session. The clearly frustrated lawmakers were not able to clearly outline their concerns in the brief time they were allotted.

Bernalillo County Major Legislative Priorities are:

- \$10 million for affordable housing
- \$1 million to purchase technology equipment and train county employees at the Bernalillo County Sheriff's office in its use
- \$5 million to design and purchase right of way for realignment of Atrisco Vista Blvd. from Double Eagle Airport to Paseo del Norte

- \$1 million to build and equip additional space at the Animal Shelter
- \$1.5 million to furnish and equip buildings and grounds at the South Valley food hub and food manufacturing facility
- \$5 million for facility improvements to the Mesa del Sol Regional Outdoor Sports Complex
- \$2 million to redevelop and replace PB and J family services building and facilities in the South Valley

The commission also heard the quarterly report from the University of New Mexico Hospital Administrator and the news is grim. The hospital is running \$12 million over budget for the first quarter of the fiscal year. Some administrators have taken pay cuts, and all employees, except medical residents will receive no pay increases this fiscal year. Residents will see a 2% raise.

The reasons for the budget crunch are higher costs for medical supplies, Medicare payments from the state that are less than the actual cost of care, and uncompensated care for people who cannot pay.

On the day of the commission meeting the hospital administrator told the commissioners that 79 people were waiting at that moment in the UNMH emergency waiting room for care. The average time spent waiting and receiving emergency care is 6 to 7 hours. UNMH is now in the process of moving its triage unit into the waiting room to try to decrease the wait time for people seeking immediate care.

The University of New Mexico Hospital is owned by Bernalillo County and residents are ultimately responsible for its financial stability.

The Leagues’ state position on health care says in part, “The LWVNM supports a health care system that provides a comprehensive level of health care for New Mexico residents and recognizes the need for efficient management of health care costs.”



**Observer Corps Report – Sandoval County Commission regular meeting
October 25, 2023**

Mary Templeton, observer (via video recording)

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

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Substance Abuse

Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention presented two programs they carry out to educate the public on fentanyl addiction and overdose response. The first is a 20-year K-12 education program for preventing substance abuse. Because reversing fentanyl overdoses requires stronger naloxone doses than other opioids, Rotary’s second program provides these stronger doses to communities, trains them on their use, and provides free subsequent treatment resources. The Albuquerque del Sol Rotary has completed this community training. The Rotary Action Group will also be working with the two Rio Rancho Rotary clubs.

As background, LWVNM supports public education programs regarding substance abuse.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Four of 17 people expressed concerns about election integrity.

Sandoval County Commission Website: <https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



**Observer Corps Report – Sandoval County Commission regular meeting
November 8, 2023
Mary Templeton, observer (via video recording)**

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

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Voter Representation

Sandoval County is home to 10 Pueblos and 2 tribal nations (Navajo and Jicarilla Apache) and has the second largest number of tribal communities and land holdings in the country. The Sandoval County Tribal Liaison Program was initially created to provide voting and election education services to native American communities that include voter registration and translation services. In addition, liaisons also meet with tribal leaders and residents to address important issues, such as substance abuse, government contracts, economic development, education, emergency services, missing indigenous people, tourism, housing, utilities, and transportation.

As background, LWVUS supports electoral systems that enhance representation for all voters.

County Legislative Priorities for which the LWV also has Advocacy Positions

The full list of state legislative priorities for Sandoval County, should these topics arise in the 2024 legislative session, may be found at <https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/280633>, agenda item 11.C. Items for which the LWV also has advocacy positions include:

- Per Board of County Commissioners Resolution 6.22.22.10, legislation that calls for improvements in voter processes including: Photo ID, Efficient Removal of Inactive Voters, Prohibiting the Use of Unsupervised Ballot Drop Boxes, Absentee Ballot Chain of Custody, and Post-election Audits
- Legislation to provide funding and statutory support for mental health resources and crisis intervention teams
- Legislation and funding to increase the availability of services for behavioral health and substance abuse
- Legislation and funding efforts to provide an increased level of training for government employees to deal with individuals in behavioral health crises
- Legislation that provides additional training and funding for public safety personnel in the areas of crisis intervention, dealing with individuals suffering from mental illness or substance abuse issues, dealing with individuals in behavioral health crises

With respect to voting processes, I was unable to locate and read Board of County Commissioners Resolution 6.22.22.10 for details.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Thirteen of nineteen speakers commented on elections. Some included praise for the 2023 election process, the County Clerk, and Deputy County Clerk.

Commissioners Discussion

One commissioner labeled US representatives who did not vote in favor of censoring a fellow congressperson as “a bunch of Jew-hating elected officials.” Details were published in the Rio Rancho Observer (<https://robserver.com/commissioner-block-calls-out-jew-hating-elected-officials/>) and found here: (<https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/280633> 1:59:50-2:01:08).

Sandoval County Commission Website: <https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



Observer Corps Report - APS Board of Education meetings

18 October and 1 November 2023

Laura J. Downing (downinglauraj@gmail.com)

I “attend” the YouTube live stream of the meetings, and I report on topics most relevant to LWVCNM policy positions.

Public Forum. The public forum has continued to be dominated by speakers concerned with books and classes that potentially discuss gender-identity and the availability of gender-affirming counselling in APS schools. Speakers have continued to accuse APS of spending more time providing information on issues like abortion and gender identity than on educational basics. Supporters of the LGBTQ+ community have spoken out in favor of schools as a safe space. Several speakers spoke against the idea of banning books in schools that discuss discrimination and other sensitive issues.

The Board meetings proper continue to be dominated by detailed discussions implementing the strategic five-year plan for APS in order to satisfy the settlement requirements of the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit. At the 18 October meeting, an early literacy monitoring report was presented. There was discussion of what can be done to improve scores. It is hoped that the new emphasis on early education will soon begin to impact results for grades 2 and 3.

The Superintendent reported on graduation rates for 2021, which were significantly affected by the loss of students during the pandemic. The President of the Board’s report at this meeting highlighted a recent tribal leaders’ summit and discussion of strategies to improve the graduation rate of native students.

At the 1 November meeting, community engagement events were discussed, specifically ones aimed at getting community input for the search for a new APS Superintendent. There was a long discussion of the new Board of Education Governance manual focusing on how to interpret requirements to report gifts and conflicts of interest that might influence Board members’ votes.

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.

