

The VOTER

DECEMBER 2025

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

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President's Report by Starlyn Brown

It's hard to believe we've reached the final month of 2025. As always, elections are still very much on our minds at the LWVCNM Voter Guide Committee. The Albuquerque runoff elections for Mayor and two City Council seats are happening now. Early voting December 1st – 6th, election day December 9th.

As members you already know how important these runoffs are—but your friends, family, and neighbors may not. Please help spread the word and encourage everyone in your network to participate. Information about the runoff election is available on our website.

Our annual Holiday Party will be held on **December 14th from 2–4 p.m.** I look forward to celebrating the season with you and hearing about your year. More party details can be found on page 3.

Preparing for the 2026 Legislative Session

December also marks the start of League active planning for the 2026 New Mexico Legislative Session. LWVNM is deeply engaged during the session—tracking bills, analyzing proposals, and advocating for good government.

Every member of the LWVCNM League is also automatically a member of LWVNM. I encourage you to consider joining the **Action Committee**. There are many meaningful ways to contribute, and participation does *not* require public speaking at hearings. Much of the work happens behind the scenes and every task matters. The committee is also a great way to learn about the process.

Key dates for the upcoming session:

- **January 2–16:** Bill prefilings period
- **January 10:** LWVNM Advocacy Workshop (Zoom)
- **January 15:** Member–Legislator Zoom Conversation on Priorities
- **January 20–February 19:** Legislative Session
- **January 29:** League Reception at La Fonda
- **January 30:** League Day at the Legislature

Communication - By Starlyn Brown

**What do we communicate? When do we communicate?
How do we communicate? Who do we communicate with?
*Help Us Build a Strong Communications Strategy***

The first use of the word Communication was in the 14th Century - the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behavior to express or exchange information or to express thoughts, feelings, etc., to another person.

I am actively recruiting members for a new Communications Committee. Clear, effective, and timely communication has never been more important. Our membership spans ages 16 to 95+ and includes students, working professionals, parents, and retirees. The voters and communities in the four counties we serve reflect that same diversity. Reaching people across such a wide range of experiences is both a challenge and an opportunity. Strong communication, both within our organization and with the broader community, is essential to informing our members and educating voters.

We currently communicate via email, our monthly newsletter, our website, Facebook and Instagram, occasional mailed letters, and handouts at voter registration and education events. We also prepare press releases, op-eds, and letters to the editor.

If you are interested in helping shape a comprehensive communications strategy—or if you enjoy creating content, organizing messages, or supporting behind-the-scenes work—I would love to hear from you.

Please reach out if you'd like to get involved. Together, we can strengthen our impact, support voters, and continue our essential mission to defend democracy.

president@lwvcnm.org

There will be NO DECEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING



The January Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Meeting January 8th

Central New Mexico member, and Action Committee Leader Dick Mason will speak at the Educational Meeting at noon on January 8, about League priorities for the 2026 legislative session.

Dick is a long-time member of the League and has led the NM Legislative Action Committee for the state league in cooperation with Akkana Peck from the Los Alamos League for the past several years. His interest has been in health care, but he champions all League priorities before the legislative committees.

If you have ever wondered how the LWVNM sets legislative priorities or how you can become more involved in championing issues before the lawmakers, this will be an opportunity to find out how to get involved.

The 2026 session of the legislature will be a 30-day session, primarily focused on the state budget. But the way a state constructs its budget reflects the priorities of the citizens. There will also be some specific issues the governor will place on the call to the legislature dealing with particular concerns.



Save the Date!

*Celebrate the Season!
Holiday Open House
Sunday, December 14th, 2 - 4 PM*

*'Tis the season to be jolly (and exhausted) !
Take a timeout and enjoy an afternoon with
League friends and colleagues.*

*Join us for a holiday celebration at the home of
LWVCNM Board Member, Karen Douglas,
1729 Miracerros Pl. NE, Albuquerque*

*Parking may be limited so please plan to share a ride
with a League colleague.*

*There will be light refreshments, conversation, and an opportunity to
share our latest accomplishments, news,
and plans for the future!*

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



Voter Guide Committee Report

The LWVCNM Voter Guides for the November 4th Local and Municipal Elections were completed in early October. Guides for Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance and Valencia Counties were created as individual PDF files based on information in VOTE411.org and were posted on our website. Our work is not yet completed since there are run-off elections in Albuquerque scheduled for December 9th for the offices of Mayor, and City Council Districts 1 and 3.

In summary:

- 88 races were managed by LWVCNM in VOTE411 for our four counties using the National League of Women Voters on-line Voter Guide. Our candidate response rates by county were:

Bernalillo	79%
Sandoval	50%
Torrance	20%
Valencia	46%

- Our primary expenses were for graphic design for the guides and publicity. We created several types of flyers, including a basic one in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese.
- Fundraising efforts were very successful thanks to the efforts of our development team. We raised enough donations to fully support this election and to have some remaining funds available to jump start the upcoming elections in 2026.

In addition to the Voter Guide .pdf documents, we created and maintained pages on the Voting and Elections page of the lwcnm.org website with links to additional information and resources for the region.

VOTE411 also provided individualized ballot information to voters based on their address. At this time, we do not have user data available, but we anticipate that we will be able to review that in the coming months.

Publicity efforts for the on-line guides included distribution of flyers to county clerks, libraries, and community centers. Karen Wentworth provided news releases and articles to several media outlets. She was interviewed by Prime Time Magazine and submitted a column to the NM Jewish Journal. Starlyn Brown was interviewed by KOAT.

We could not do this work without the help of the many individuals who contributed their time by calling candidates and local offices, tabling at community events, and distributing flyers to help bring this valued resource to our communities. We are truly grateful for all the support for this project from our members.

We are also beginning to think about 2026. One area where we need help is communications. We would like to find some enthusiastic volunteers who can help work out a coordinated communications plan with the state and other leagues. Anyone who is interested can contact Lani Desaulniers, Linda Miller, or Karen Wentworth.

- Lani Desaulniers & the Voter Guide Committee

HUGE Thank You to members who staffed LWVCNM 2025 Candidate Forums

- Submitted by Mary H Smith, Forum Coordinator

Each election is preceded by a lot of arm-twisting and, sometimes, begging for volunteers to staff the candidate forums in which the League is involved. This year was like the others before and yet was totally different.

LWVCNM moderated and staffed two candidate forums and served as timekeepers for several others. Timekeepers and Question Reviewers are the heart and soul of all forums, and they ensure the League continues to be a reliable, nonpartisan player in voter education.

As the off-board forum coordinator, I am always enormously grateful for all the members who answer our calls for help. I want to extend a huge and heartfelt *thank you* to the following volunteers:



October 8, 2025 — Albuquerque Mayoral Forum

Timekeeper: Janet Simon and Jill Crawley

Question reviewers: Mary Mulvany, Judith Minks, Karen Douglas, Karen Wentworth

LWVCNM welcome table: Linda Miller and Jill Crawley

October 9, 2025 — Village of Los Ranchos Trustee Forum

Timekeepers: Starlyn Brown and Jill Crawley

Question reviewer: Karen Wentworth

October 15, 2025 — Albuquerque Mayoral Forum at KOAT

Timekeepers: Starlyn Brown and Jill Crawley

October 22, 2025 — Albuquerque Mayoral Forum at Albuquerque Journal

Timekeepers: Starlyn Brown and Linda Miller

November 24, 2025 — Mayoral Runoff Debate at KOAT

Timekeepers: Jill Crawley and Linda Miller

¡Muchísimas gracias a todos!

LWVCNM Book Club

The LWVCNM Book Club meets the 4th Wednesday of each odd-numbered month.

New members are always welcome! If you are not able to complete a book before the session, now worries...join a session and complete the book at your convenience. Great conversation, light snacks, and a way to better get to know LWVCNM members.

Next Selection:

Date: Wednesday, January 28, 2026

Time: 5:30 pm

Location: LWVCNM Office Conference Room - 6739 Academy Rd NE

Title: To be announced via Hot Topics email.

Contact Janet at 505-401-2052 for questions.

2025 Recap

Thanks to everyone who participated in the LWVCNM Book Club during 2025! Book Club attendees have a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences which led to interesting discussions and new perspectives. Our 2025 books included the following interesting and informative selections:

January 2025

Whiskey Tender by Deborah Taffa

March 2025

Hell If We Don't Change Our Ways by Brittany Means

May 2025

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration by Isabel Willkerson

July 2025

James by Percival Everett

November 2025

The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)
- *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855)
- *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881)

LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:
Starlyn Brown

1st Co-Vice Presidents/Voter Guide:
Karen Wentworth & Lani Desaulniers

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Elizabeth Shields

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Director/Webmaster/Zoom Host: Linda Miller

Voter Guide Distribution: Ellen Kelly

Advocacy Team/Observer Corps:
Karen Wentworth

Volunteer Coordinator:
Linda Miller

If you need help with Zoom,
please reach out to Zoom host, Linda Miller,
lmiller@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

Dec 3rd (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
LWVCNM Board Meeting,
ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome.

*** NO LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting this month ***

Dec 14th (Sunday) 2 – 4 PM

LWVCNM Holiday Open House
See p. 3

Jan 5th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
LWVCNM Board Meeting,
ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome.

January 8th (Thursday) 12 Noon
LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM
Topic: **Legislative Session League Priorities**
Speaker: **Dick Mason**

January 10th (Saturday) time TBD
LWVNM Advocacy Workshop (Zoom)

January 15th (Thursday) time TBD (Zoom)
Member–Legislator Zoom Conversation on
Priorities

January 20th (Thursday) 12 Noon
Legislative Session Begins

January 29th (Thursday) 5:30pm
League Reception at La Fonda Santa Fe

January 30th (Friday) 8:30am
League Day at the Legislature

NOTE THE DIFFERENT DATE!

Feb 26th (Thursday) 12 Noon
LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM
Topic: **Open Elections in New Mexico**
Speaker: **Bob Perls, NM Open Elections**

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting 2025

Mary Mulvany /Janet Kirkpatrick

All nine councilors were present at the 20 Oct and 05 Nov meetings. Councilors: Louie Sanchez – District 1, Joaquin Baca – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Nichole Rogers – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Dan Champine – District 8, Renée Grout – District 9.

General Public Comment

Speakers were allowed two minutes for comment. Nine members of the public spoke in favor of **ranked choice voting** at the Oct 20th meeting, calling on the council to revisit this issue and propose pertinent legislation. Speakers noted that run-off elections are costly and that voter turnout decreases for the run-off. No speakers spoke in opposition to ranked choice voting.

Affordable Housing

At the Oct 20th meeting, City Council unanimously voted to approve a supplemental agreement to the Casitas del Camino Development Agreement between the City of Albuquerque and the Albuquerque Housing Authority to provide \$2M of pass-through grant funds from the State of New Mexico. The project is located at 112 60th St NW to 232 60th St NW and Knotts Landing Court and encompasses an 88-unit affordable, multi-family rental housing development serving households that are at or below 60% Area Median Income (AMI). [EC-25-499](#)

Traffic Code

At the Nov 5th meeting, City Council unanimously passed legislation to amend the traffic ordinance, which had not been updated in 50 years. The amendment focuses on traffic signals and crossings for vulnerable road users (bicyclists and pedestrians). [O-25-98](#)

The legislation's sponsor, Councilor Fiebelkorn, stated the changes are the direct result of efforts by the family of Kayla Vandlingham, who was killed in a bicycle accident in August. The family spoke at the meeting in support of these changes.

City Council also unanimously passed a companion resolution requiring City Administration to design and implement a public education campaign to inform residents of these changes to traffic laws. The resolution also calls on the Administration to report on the status and recommended improvements of striped crosswalks and signals by 01 May, 2026. [R-25-196](#)

They mayor signed both bills on Nov. 18.



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

December 2025

Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Commission Sets Priorities for 2026 New Mexico Legislative Session

Present: Barbara Baca – Commission District 1, Frank Baca – Commission District 2, Adriann Barboa – Commission District 3, Walt Benson – Commission District 4, Eric Olivas – Commission District 5

Bernalillo County Commissioners are focused on the upcoming legislative session. At their October and November meetings they approved county priorities for the New Mexico state budget. They look to obtain more money for:

- Housing – expanding the affordable housing program now in progress.
- Criminal Justice/Jails – increased funding for programs and jobs.
- Youth – increased funding for rehabilitation, wrap around services for young people accused of crimes.
- Infrastructure – increased funding for the state infrastructure program.

In addition, they approved support for the New Mexico Association of Counties Priorities:

- \$9.3 million to fully fund the County Detention Facility Reimbursement Act Fund to reimburse counties for the actual cost of housing state inmates.
- Courthouse funding – This would authorize continued funding to the Administrative Office of the Courts for construction and renovation of state district courthouses.
- 700 Mhz radios – This would authorize continued funding for the monthly operational costs of 700Mhz radios to build out state interconnectivity infrastructure.
- Detention Recruitment and Retention – Additional funds for the Corrections Workforce Capacity Building Fund administered by the Department of Finance and Administration.

Housing continues to be one of the big ticket items for counties as they work to pick up the slack in federal government funding for housing. League positions support affordable housing for all, but it continues to be a fundamental concern nationwide. The latest statistic comes from the National Association of Realtors, which says 40 is now the average age for first time home buyers.

The county is also looking at putting together a speed and noise enforcement task force.

Another issue of long term concern is the cost to county taxpayers for supporting the University of New Mexico Hospital. In theory, UNMH is the county hospital. In reality, it is the main trauma center for the State of New Mexico. The hospital saw \$28,774,129.00 in uncompensated care costs for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The LWVCNM position on this issue is:

“LWVCNM believes society has a responsibility to provide comprehensive health care for the indigent and supports mill levies as a means of funding such health care.”



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

October 22, 2025

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

Present: Michael Meek (Chair), Jordan Juarez (Vice Chair), Joshua Jones, Katherine Bruch, Jon Herr (video)

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No topics for which the League has an advocacy position were taken up during this meeting.

Additional Comments

Economic Development

Project Ranger Update - The proposed Castelion Corporation facility would manufacture solid rocket motors and assemble all-up rounds (missiles). The facility would not synthesize ammonium perchlorate or manufacture chemicals. It would assemble and test electronic components and conduct static firing of solid rocket motors and mix inert and combustible chemicals. It would not conduct flight testing at the facility. Sandoval County was identified as area with skills and a desire to build weapons.

Although the group addressed safety precautions for handling combustible materials, they did not address precautions against groundwater contamination by ammonium perchlorate, a contaminant that is often found in drinking water near rocket and missile manufacturing facilities

(<https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/perchlorate-drinking-water-frequent-questions>).

When asked about contamination due to an accident, the company responded that they will carry insurance for that.

The Commission unanimously approved the Local Economic Development Project for Castelion Corporation.

Public Comment

Five people expressed concern about Project Ranger, including whether there would be a public hearing before the project receives its final approval.

Commissioner Comment

During public comment, one person expressed concern over two Commissioners having aerospace backgrounds and questioned possibility for conflicts of interest with respect to Project Ranger. One of those two Commissioners addressed this comment, calling it slander and a baseless attack to be expected from children throwing tantrums. He did make the case that experience results in better informed decisions. (video <https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/358972> at 2:16:05)

Sandoval County Commission Website

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



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

November 12, 2025

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

Present: Jordan Juarez (Acting Chair), Joshua Jones, Katherine Bruch, Jon Herr

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No topics for which the League has an advocacy position were taken up during this meeting.

Additional Comments

Sandoval County Commission Website

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

Volunteer Opportunities

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 lwvcnmoffice@gmail.com Leave a message with your name/phone number and expressing your interest in finding out more about volunteering. We'll 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.



**6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124
Albuquerque, NM 87109**

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.