

Bernalillo County Commission Report for The Voter

December 2025

Bernalillo County Commission Begins Setting up Safe Spaces for Immigrants

Present for Nov. 18 and Dec. 10 meetings: Barbara Baca, District 1; Frank Baca, District 2; Adriann Barboa, District 3; Walt Benson, District 4; Eric Olivas, District 5

The commissioners in Bernalillo County have passed a “Safe Spaces” ordinance that is designed to give undocumented residents of the county some refuge in case of Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs check of documents within the county.

The ordinance designates four types of areas as “Safe Spaces.”

- Public Service Space – including government buildings, and disaster or emergency response sites. It is not yet clear whether state or federally owned buildings will be impacted by this ordinance.
- Resource Providers – including community resource centers, legal services providers, homeless shelters and violence service providers
- Work Areas – work zones and construction sites on county property.
- Private Spaces – The county manager has 30 days to develop policies for businesses seeking registration and the appropriate signage indicating private spaces. This would apply to businesses with five or more employees seeking registration to adopt a safety plan to protect against unwanted law enforcement intrusion into private spaces.

This generally aligns with the U.S. League of Women Voters stand on Immigration.

“The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the United States on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law....In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for individuals already living in the country without permission to earn legal status.”

The county is also continuing to press ahead on putting together tax breaks for property developers who include affordable housing space in their projects.

The Behavioral Health Authority underwritten by the county presented a yearly report on how it is spending mental health money on county residents. It currently is using \$9.3 million in

special gross receipts tax funds as well as \$893,000 in county indigent funds. The report also revealed that two thirds of the county residents enrolled in various mental health and addiction treatment programs are male.

Interestingly, there was no mention of new resources now in operation by the state of New Mexico, so it is not clear whether the two levels of local government are working together.

BCC observer Karen Wentworth