

## **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.”