

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

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**President's Report
by Starlyn Brown**

January felt like it moved at two speeds—slow in the day-to-day yet somehow gone in a flash. Thank you to everyone who wrote, called, or did both, to encourage the Governor to add the Freedom to Read New Mexico bills to the 2026 legislative agenda. While we were disappointed that no message was issued, our work is far from over. The Coalition will regroup, refocus, and be ready for the 2027 sixty-day session.

The current 2026 thirty-day session is a budget session. To date, the Governor has sent more than 55 messages have been sent to the House and over 50 to the Senate authorizing additional bills for consideration. Committees and floor calendars will remain full, and we are only halfway through the session. Health care, crime, and education are prominent topics, and it will be interesting to see where everything lands when the session concludes.

Looking ahead to 2027, New Mexico will welcome a new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and Land Commissioner. New leadership will bring both opportunities and challenges for the League, and we will be ready to engage.

February also marks the beginning of our work on the June Primary Election Voter Guide. League members will once again be out in communities registering and educating voters at events in Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrence and Valencia Counties. Many federal and state offices are on the ballot this year, including New Mexico's three U.S. House seats and one U.S. Senate seat, along with numerous state-level positions.

As we have noted before, the primary election will effectively determine many of the winners in the general election. Approximately 270,000 New Mexico voters will now have an easier path to participation thanks to the state's new semi-open primary law—an important step toward expanding access and engagement in our democratic process. Now we need to make sure voters are aware of the change and what options they have.

The more our members are involved, the more we can do to defend democracy and educate New Mexicans. I am always available to answer questions, listen to concerns, and learn more about the issues that matter most to you. Please don't hesitate to reach out at president@lwvcm.org.

Voter Services Kick Off Meeting

February 11th 3pm in Person

It is going to be a very busy year! Please join us for an in person planning meeting on 2/11/2026 at 3:00pm in the League Conference Room. This meeting is open to League members who would like to help with Voter Registration events, Voter Education, and have ideas for future events to reach potential voters and provide voter education.

Join us for the **Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series**

FEBRUARY EDUCATIONAL MEETING

Revised Date - February 26th, at Noon



WHERE: LWVCNM Offices Conference Room, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, ample parking available

In person (members and guests only); Zoom (members and general public)

TOPIC: Semi Open Primaries and the Recent Passage of SB16

SPEAKER: Bob Perls, Founder and President of the non-profit New Mexico Open Elections

The February LWVCNM Educational Meeting (please note the revised date) will feature Bob Perls addressing Open Primaries and the recent passage of SB16, permitting independent and Decline to State voters to participate in NM primary elections. The address by Perls, the Founder and President of the non-profit New Mexico Open Elections for 10 years will include the impact of this legislation and the task of educating the electorate to fully exercise this option.

LWVCNM members are continually involved in seeking to increase the number of residents fully participating in decisions impacting our democracy. Most LWV members are also aware that many New Mexico voters, including younger voters, are either “no Party designated” or “Decline to State” which excludes their participation in NM Primary Elections – often the decisive vote for some elective offices.



Additionally, those with no major party designation may be unaware that the 2025 NM legislature passed SB16, “**NON-MAJOR PARTY VOTERS IN PRIMARY ELECTIONS**” with Governor Lujan-Grisham’s signature into law April 2025.

The full text of the final bill may be viewed here: [Legislation - New Mexico Legislature](#)

New Mexico Open Elections (NMOE) was founded in 2015 by former New Mexico State Representative and U.S. Diplomat, Robert “Bob” Perls. The organization is focused on open primaries, and other issues like ranked-choice voting, independent redistricting, and legislative modernization. (cont.)

Bob is a former New Mexico State Representative and former U.S. Diplomat with the Department of State. His family moved to New Mexico when he was five years old and resided in the Albuquerque area. He attended Albuquerque Public Schools, Pomona College, where he earned a B.A. in Government and University of Maryland where he earned an M.S. in Healthcare Management. He is a serial entrepreneur in the healthcare, cybersecurity, and renewable energy fields.

Bob was instrumental in the passage of the semi open primaries bill and is an expert in election reform. He is also Honorary Consul for Germany in NM. Bob lives in Corrales with his wife, Joan.

Upcoming Monthly Educational Programs:

- Thursday, March 12th Hybrid 12:00 -- Transparency in our Government/Sunshine Month
 - Thursday, April 9, 2026, Hybrid 12:00 -- Environmental Issues in NM/Earth Day
-

Annual Program Planning February 21st 10-12 on Zoom

Local Leagues conduct annual Program Planning to consider current issue positions for effective advocacy – Positions are required prior to supporting/opposing legislation or issuing Public Statements (2025-26 purple LWVCNM Member Handbook).

There have been many recent changes to government priorities, accepted practices, and resident freedom during 2025. This February 2026 LWVCNM Program Planning offers LWV members the opportunity to review our current positions for adequacy to address our concerns and propose supplements/revisions to ensure relevancy.

We will host our annual Program Planning meeting Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 10:00am – 12:00 NOON via Zoom. Members are strongly encouraged to submit proposals. During the meeting the study, consensus, and position approval process, which is strictly defined, will be discussed. Addition/Revision of Positions requires a Study Proposal approved by the LWVCNM Board with member approval during the Annual Meeting in May 2026. There is a structured approach required and members seeking to change Positions will be provided with guidance, support, and examples. Local Leagues will consider LWVUS concurrence with the LWVWA Welcoming Immigrants Position (below) at the June 2026 meeting. Please plan to join other interested members for this informative discussion and help shape the decisions the LWV makes.

For Discussion Consideration of Recommendation for Concurrence with LWVWA Welcoming Immigrants Position

LWVWA Welcoming Immigrants (Current LWVUS Position on Immigration, Impact on Issues, p. 167)

Impact On Issues 2024 – 2026 | League of Women Voters

Concurrence Proposal (Generic Position)
LWWA POSITION ON PROTECTING IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

POSITION IN BRIEF: The League of Women Voters believes that all residents, regardless of immigration status or citizenship, should be treated with dignity and respect. This means that residents, regardless of immigration status or citizenship, should have access to essential state-funded services, have the opportunity to avail themselves of legal representation in court and immigration proceedings, and have the opportunity to live and work in safety. The League encourages all elected officials and government leaders to take action to ensure these fundamental rights. It also means that political leaders have an obligation to condemn xenophobia, discrimination, and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Specifically, the League believes:

I-1: Xenophobia, racism, discrimination against immigrants, and anti-immigration rhetoric must be condemned at all levels of government, business, and civil society. Elected officials and government leaders should take clear and consistent actions to counter these threats to democracy.

I-2: States should encourage federal policies that protect the rights of immigrants, including through litigation when necessary.

I-3: States should take leadership in ensuring access to legal services for all persons, regardless of immigration status. This is particularly important for immigrants in removal proceedings.

I-4: State and local governments should seek to provide essential services to all residents, regardless of immigration status.

I-5: States should take steps to ensure effective coordination among state agencies and other organizations that interact with immigrants and refugees, including funding to permit such coordination.

I-6: States should ensure safe working conditions, fair pay and benefits, and the right to unionize for all workers, regardless of immigration status.

I-7: States should urge the federal government to issue timely work authorization permits to immigrants and refugees.

The LWVCNM Book Club

meets the 4th Wednesday of each odd-numbered month

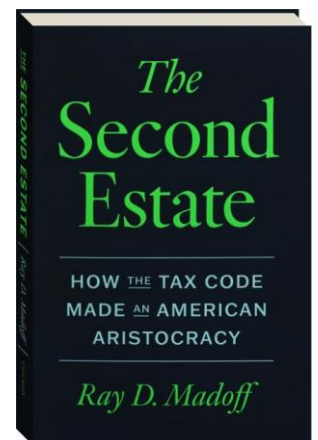
New members are always welcome!

If you are not able to complete a book before the session, no 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.

Our Next Selection:

Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Time: 5:30 pm
Location: LWVCNM Office Conference Room –
6739 Academy Rd NE
Title: **The Second Estate: How the Tax Code Made an American Aristocracy**



Author Ray Madoff, a Boston College law professor, explores the impact of income tax regulations on tax burden and growing wealth inequality in the United States.

Contact Janet at 505-401-2052 for questions.



LWVCNM HAPPY HOUR



Women's History Month



Celebrate the strength, resilience, and achievements of women past and present with your League friends!



WHEN: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 | 4-6PM

WHERE: Ponderosa Brewing Company
1761 Bellamah Ave NW

Just drop in. No RSVP needed.
Ponderosa features beer, wine, spirits
and a full menu of delicious pub grub!
Check it out: ponderosabrewing.com

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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

Feb 2nd (Monday) 4 pm – 6 pm

LWVCNM Happy Hour!
@ Quarter Celtic Brewpub,
1100 San Mateo Blvd NE @ Lomas Blvd.
Just drop in! No RSVP necessary!

Feb 4th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

LWVCNM Board Meeting,
ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome.

Feb 10th (Tuesday) 10am

Inaugural meeting Communications Committee
Via Zoom

Feb 11 (Wednesday) 3pm

Voter Services Committee
Office Conference Room

Feb 19th (Thursday) 12 Noon

Closing Day – 2026 NM Legislative Session

Feb 21st (Saturday) 10 AM - 12 Noon

2026 Annual LWVCNM Program Planning
Zoom only
More information on p.3 and web

****NOTE THE DIFFERENT DATE!****

Feb 26th (Thursday) 12 Noon

LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM

Topic: Semi-Open Primaries
Speaker: Bob Perls, NM Open Elections

Mar 4th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

LWVCNM Board Meeting,
ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome.

Mar 10th (Tuesday) 4 - 6pm

Ponderosa Brewing Company

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting

Jan 5, 2026

Mary Mulvany /Janet Kirkpatrick

All Councilors attended the 5 Jan 2026 meeting: Stephanie Telles – 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

The council welcomed one new member: Stephanie Telles who replaces Louie Sanchez in District 1. The council elected Klarissa Pena as Council President and Dan Champine as Council Vice President.

General Public Comment

Speakers were allowed one minute for comment.

Nine members of the community spoke about proposed amendments to the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO). The IDO amendments were not a part of this meeting’s agenda. Five people spoke in favor of the amendments. Four people spoke in opposition, stating the process is flawed and lacks transparency.

Six speakers (including local author Brittany Means) called for a moratorium on the city’s sweeps of homeless encampments in which people’s belongings are discarded. One speaker pointed out that the sweeps have not led to a reduction in homelessness. Other speakers mentioned the lack of humanity in such actions and called for the city to make greater effort to bring services to unhoused people where they are.

Local Economic Development Act Funding

The council voted unanimously to approve a Project Participation Agreement between the City and Indus Synergies, to support completion of a Business Accelerator Enterprise located at Mesa Del Sol. The agreement includes \$5M in funding from the State Economic Development Department and \$750K in city funds. The legislation was sent to the mayor for signature. [O-25-106](#)



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission
January 2025
Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Begins Discussion to Set Guardrails for Locations of Data Centers

A proposal to set preconditions for large scale data centers interested in locating in Bernalillo County was a major topic of discussion during the Bernalillo County Commission’s January 13th meeting. The proposal was introduced by former commission chairman Eric Olivas.

The proposal would only apply to data centers seeking tax breaks or some access to county funds.

It requires :

- Hiring people who already live in the county and paying them a fair living wage.
- Paying for the cost of expanding or upgrading the electric grid to accommodate the usage of the business.
- Any microgrid built by the business and connected to the Public Service Company of New Mexico system would have to meet established clean energy goals.
- Any proposed project would have to offset its water usage with a benefit somewhere else in the local ecosystem.

The proposal is expected to come up for a final vote in the near future.

The league does not have a position that directly addresses the impact of large scale electric and water users in either the business or local environmental positions.

In other action, the county clerk has asked the commission to divide some precincts to accommodate growth in advance of the 2026 election cycle.



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting
January 7, 2026
Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

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

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

Public Comment

One person asked that Commission meeting agendas posted prior to meetings contain information about the listed items.

Sandoval County Commission Website

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



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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.