

The VOTER

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

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President's Report by Starlyn Brown

August: A Month of Voting Rights Milestones

Remembering the Voting Rights Act of 1965

August 6 marks the 61st anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most significant voting rights laws in our nation's history. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Act into law on August 6, 1965.

Among its important protections, Section 2 prohibits voting qualifications, standards, practices, or procedures that result in citizens being denied or having their voting rights abridged on account of race or color.

The Voting Rights Act has particular significance in New Mexico. Section 2 protects Hispanic and Native American voters from discriminatory voting practices, while other provisions help ensure language access. These protections have played an important role in removing barriers to voting and ensuring equal access to the ballot for New Mexicans.

At the League of Women Voters' 2026 Convention, Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of President Johnson, shared her personal reflections on her father's signing of the Voting Rights Act and the significance of that historic moment. As we commemorate the 61st anniversary of this landmark legislation, I encourage you to watch her powerful remarks and reflect on the continuing importance of protecting the right to vote. [Luci Baines Johnson: Remarks for LWV's 2026 Convention](#)

August 1920: Women Win the Vote

August also marks another milestone in the expansion of voting rights. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment, providing the three-fourths majority needed for adoption. Eight days later, on August 26, U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the amendment, guaranteeing that the right to vote could not be denied on the basis of sex. Today, August 26th is recognized as **Women's Equality Day**, commemorating this historic expansion of voting rights.

(cont.)

New Mexico Women Who Helped Win the Vote

New Mexico holds a unique place in the history of the women's suffrage movement. Unlike many states, its campaign for women's voting rights was both bilingual and multicultural. Hispanic and Anglo women worked together to ensure that Spanish-speaking women were included in the movement.

One of the state's most influential leaders was **Adelina "Nina" Otero-Warren** of Santa Fe. She led New Mexico's branch of the Congressional Union, insisted that campaign materials be printed in both English and Spanish, and helped build support for New Mexico's ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920. In 1922, she became the first Hispanic woman to run for the U.S. Congress.

Other women also made lasting contributions. **Trinidad Cabeza de Baca** organized suffrage events and helped recruit Hispanic women to the cause. **Aurora Lucero-White Lea**, an educator and author, promoted women's suffrage through public speaking and bilingual outreach while advocating for New Mexico's Hispanic heritage. **Dolores "Lola" Chávez de Armijo** participated in the Santa Fe suffrage movement and later served as New Mexico State Librarian.

In Albuquerque, **Julia Brown Asplund** organized local suffrage efforts through civic organizations and continued to champion civic engagement after women won the right to vote. Her contributions were recognized in August 2024 with the dedication of a historical marker near Hodgin Hall on the University of New Mexico campus.

These women, along with many others, organized meetings, spoke publicly, and persuaded elected officials that women deserved an equal voice in our democracy.

Yet the ratification of the 19th Amendment did not guarantee voting rights for all women. Many Native American women in New Mexico remained unable to vote. Although Native Americans were granted U.S. citizenship in 1924, significant barriers to voting persisted in New Mexico for decades.

These August anniversaries remind us that the expansion of voting rights has been a long and continuing journey. From the New Mexico women who fought for suffrage to the passage of the Voting Rights Act generations later, each milestone expanded participation in our democracy. Their legacy continues in the League's work today: **empowering voters and defending democracy**.

LWVCNM Updates

Voter Guide

The Voter Guide Committee is hard at work preparing for the November General Election. The *Voter Guide* will be printed and distributed in early October. Volunteers are always needed to help with a variety of tasks. We are still looking for members to help with calls to candidates and distribution locations for the *Voter Guide*. Calls to all candidates start August 10-12, and location calls are made in the last week of August and September 1-4. If you can help out with the candidate and/or location calls, please contact Ellen Kelly at telbg66@yahoo.com or (505) 440-8931.

Valencia County Fair

We are excited to participate in the Valencia County Fair, August 24–29, for the first time! With six days of activities, we have many shifts to fill. Tabling is a great way to learn more about the League's

work, spend time with fellow members, and, most importantly, help educate and engage voters. Please contact Jill Crawley (505) 480-1354 or Starlyn Brown (505) 720-4350 to volunteer.

Civic Education Needs You!

Requests for civic and voter education programs continue to grow. We are also exploring partnering with other organizations such as the NM Council for Social Studies (NMCSS). While this is wonderful news, we need more volunteers to help us respond to these opportunities and participate in the many community events we are invited to attend.

We would love to expand the Civic Education Committee so we can reach more students, voters, and community members throughout Central New Mexico. Please contact Liz Shields (559) 578-5670 if you are interested in joining the committee or helping with an upcoming event.

There are many ways to get involved with LWVCNM, whether you have a few hours to volunteer at an event or would like to become more involved with a committee. Every volunteer helps us reach more voters and strengthen civic participation in our communities.

There is NO August Educational Meeting,
but join us again in September for the
Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series



SEPTEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING

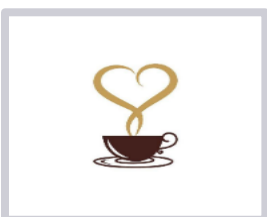
Thursday, September 10TH at Noon

WHERE: LWVCNM Offices Conference Room, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, ample parking available
In person (members and guests only); Zoom (members and general public)

TOPIC: IMMIGRANT DETENTION IN NEW MEXICO

SPEAKERS: TBA

[This will be a hybrid meeting at 12 PM with in-person attendance in the LWVCNM conference room](#)



Come to our Saturday Drop-In Coffee on August 15th from 10 am - Noon at the League Conference Room, 6739 Academy Rd, NE Albuquerque. Special performance by the 3 Muses Performance Collective at 11 am.

IN MEMORIAM - CHRISTINA LITTLE

Christina Little, Life Member of the League of Women Voters, and active member of the League in Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Austin, Texas has passed away.

She was the president of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico in the 1990's and president of the Albuquerque League from 1997 to 1999.

A celebration of Life will be held at the Peace Lutheran Church in Las Cruces on August 8 at 10 a.m. A luncheon for guests will follow.



The LWVCNM Book Club

New members are always welcome!

The LWVCNM Book Club meets the 4th Wednesday of each odd-numbered month at 5:30pm. (Except November, which meets the 3rd Wednesday.)

New members are always welcome! If you cannot complete a book before the session, come anyway and join the conversation. Enjoy light snacks and the opportunity to get to know other LWVCNM members.

Next Gathering:

Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Time: 5:30 pm

Location: LWVCNM Office Conference Room - 6739 Academy Rd NE

Title: Empire of AI: Dreams and Nightmares in Sam Altman's OpenAI by Karen Hao.

Journalist Karen Hao won numerous awards for this book which is a New York Times Bestseller. Per the publisher's website: "From a brilliant longtime AI insider with intimate access to the world of Sam Altman's OpenAI from the beginning, an eye-opening account of arguably the most fateful tech arms race in history..."

Upcoming titles:

November 18th - The Wage Standard: What's Wrong in the Labor Market and How to Fix It by Arindrajit Dube.

Any questions? Contact Janet at 505-401-2052

LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Starlyn Brown

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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

Aug. 3rd (Monday) 4 pm

Happy Hour
Craft Republic

Aug. 5th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

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

There will be NO
August Educational Meeting

Aug. 15 (Saturday) 10-12 am

Drop in Coffee
Three Muses Performance Collective
performance at 11 am

Aug. 23 - 30 Valencia County Fair

Sept. 2nd (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

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

Sept. 9th (Wednesday) 4 pm

Happy Hour
Location TBD

Sept. 10th (Thursday) 12 Noon

LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM
Topic: Immigrant Detention in New Mexico
Speaker: TBA

Sept. 23rd (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

LWVCNM Book Club
LWVCNM Office Conference Room
Book choice: Empire of AI: Dreams and
Nightmares in Sam Altman's OpenAI
by Karen Hao

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting

June 15, 2026

Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick

All Councilors attended the 15 Jun 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

General Information

At the beginning of the 15 Jun meeting, Council Vice President Dan Champine stated that members of the public were allowed one minute to speak because there were over 80 people signed up to speak. The meeting began at 5 pm and was adjourned at 11:38 pm.

The meeting agenda included two measures related to a proposed ballot measure to increase the Gross Receipts Tax. The two measures were R-26-43, the resolution to place the measure on the ballot in the fall election, and O-26-42, the enacting bill (details below). The Council did not pass R-26-43 and then voted to withdraw O-26-42. Because of this, members of the public who had signed up to speak against O-26-42 were not afforded an opportunity to express their opinion. At 11:32 pm, after most of the audience had left the meeting, a motion was made to reconsider R-26-43. Although the motion to reconsider R-26-43 did not pass, this process could have resulted in a change of outcome without public input.

Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) link: [O-26-36](#)

The Council voted unanimously to approve a project involving Eden Pharmaceuticals, LLC to expand its compounding pharmacy and fulfillment center. This expansion would include the addition of 65 new employees. The City will administer and disburse funds totaling up to \$400k: \$300K from the State Economic Development Department and \$100K from the City. The ordinance was signed by the mayor on 29 Jun.

Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB)– Journal Center Hotel link: [O-26-37](#)

The Council voted unanimously to authorize the issuance and sale of \$25M Albuquerque, New Mexico taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds for the Dreamcatcher Journal Center Hotel (Home2 Suites by Hilton). The company is responsible for paying off the bonds. The project is exempt from property taxes for 20 years but will make a payment in lieu of taxes of 30% of the property tax amount. Equipment purchased with bond proceeds is exempt from gross receipts taxes. The project is expected to create 32-37 jobs. The ordinance was signed by the mayor on 29 Jun.

Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) – Sawmill Hotel link:[O-26-38](#)

At the 15 Jun meeting, the Council voted to postpone consideration of a \$40M Industrial Revenue Bond for Dreamcatcher Sawmill Hotel. The decision to postpone came after eight residents of the neighboring area spoke about their concerns. Their concerns included increased traffic and architectural design of a chain hotel that might not fit the area. The Council voted to postpone consideration until the 3 Aug meeting.

Proposed Ballot Measure: Gross Receipts Tax Increase links: R-26-43 and [O-26-42](#)

Background: at the 16 Mar meeting: Councilor Bassan proposed an ordinance to increase the gross receipts tax (GRT) by 0.4875% which would pay for municipal capital projects, related debt service, and municipal operations. That proposed ordinance failed. See the Observer Corps' Report in the May, 2026 issue of The Voter.

At the 15 Jun meeting, Councilor Bassan proposed a resolution to put the 0.4875% gross receipts tax increase on the ballot in the fall election. Half of the increase would be designated for capital projects and half was for operational costs, including wage increases for City employees. Twelve members of the public spoke against this resolution during the general comment period or during the proposal's comment period. These speakers objected to increased taxes, the regressive nature of the tax, and the difficulties for people on fixed incomes to pay higher taxes. Two people spoke in favor of the resolution citing the importance of supporting city employees.

The Council voted against this proposed ballot measure (R-26-43), with four Councilors voting in favor (Baca, Bassan, Peña, and Rogers) and five opposed (Champine, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, and Telles). Because this resolution failed, the Councilors voted to withdraw the companion enacting ordinance (O-26-42) from consideration. Members of the public had signed up to speak on O-26-42 and were thus not allowed to speak.

Near the end of the 15 June meeting, at 11:32 pm, after most of the citizens in the audience had left, including those who had originally signed up to speak on O-26-42 but were not heard, Councilor Grout made a motion to reconsider the proposed ballot measure. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bassan. The Council voted against the motion to reconsider the resolution by a vote of four in favor (Baca, Bassan, Grout, Peña) to five opposed (Champine, Fiebelkorn, Lewis, Rogers, and Telles).





Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission July 2026 Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Commission to Consider Public Financing for County Candidates

Present: Barbara Baca, District 1; Frank Baca, District 2; Adriann Barboa, District 3; Walt Benson, District 4; Eric Olivas, District 5. Walt Benson, excused from June 23 meeting.

It looks like Bernalillo County voters may have an opportunity to make a decision about whether county officials should have the option of public financing of campaign expenses. Commissioner Eric Olivas introduced a bill that would amend the county charter to allow candidates for county commission, county clerk, treasurer and tax assessor to opt in to public financing for their campaigns.

The commission plans to vote on whether to put the proposed charter amendment on the ballot at its August 11 meeting. The commission also plans to appoint the Bernalillo County Manager and her designee, the county attorney and the county clerk, along with a member of the county commission to form an ad hoc group to determine the actual cost of the amendment to the county budget for the next six years. It doesn't appear that any member of the public will be involved in the process.

There is a problem here. The ad hoc group would not be asked to submit their financial assessment of the cost of the amendment until August of 2027, long after the issue is put to a public vote. So, voters may be asked to approve an open-ended cost to the county budget without any real information as to the size of that cost, or explanation of how public financing would be implemented.

Commissioners say the public will have an opportunity to discuss the cost of public financing in two public hearings before the proposal is implemented, but those public hearings will come months after the proposed charter amendment vote in November. The public will not have an opportunity to vote on the issue after the cost analysis is completed.

LWVNM Position: LWVNM believes that methods of financing political campaigns and public offices should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, maximize fiscal accountability and transparency, and allow maximum citizen participation in the process.



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

June 24, 2026

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

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

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

Emergency Declaration

The Commission unanimously passed an emergency declaration prompted by the McCauley fire in the Jemez, which passed unanimously.

Sandoval County Elected Official Salary Commission

The ordinance to adopt a five-person commission of county residents to determine salaries of elected county officials passed unanimously.

Transfer of Federal Land

The Governor of Sandia Pueblo spoke in favor of a proposed resolution supporting the transfer of land protected by the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act from Forest Service (USDA) management to Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior) management. The federal Act protects (1) the Pueblo of Sandia's rights and interests in such Area; (2) the wilderness and National Forest character of the Area; and (3) the public's longstanding use and enjoyment of the Area. Recent federal cuts to the Forest Service resources have resulted in vandalism of cultural and religious sites, increased trash, and decreased coordination between Sandia Pueblo, the Forest Service, and Sandoval County when emergencies arise. By transferring the land to BIA management, the Pueblo could play a more direct role in management and in coordination with the County. The transfer is not expected to affect public access. Commissioners passed the resolution unanimously.

Sandoval County Commission Website

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



Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative (MRGHC) - Affordable Housing Report

July 2026

Janie McGuigan

The MRGHC met on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at the MRCOG Offices Board Room for a regularly scheduled meeting. Four of the five current MRGHC Commissioners attended: Lawrence Rael, Chair, Dan Majewski, Steve Anaya and Connie Chavez. Other attendees were: Marcos Gonzales, County staff; John Brooks, NM Finance Authority, Zach Snyder, Snyder Construction, and Jordan Varella, Director of Housing, City of Albuquerque. The meeting was called to order by Lawrence Rael, Chair. The agenda was approved and there was no public comment offered.

Zach Snyder of Snyder Construction provided an overview of two workforce and affordable housing projects currently under construction:

- Solona West (86th & Sunset Gardens) and The View @ Sunport at I-25 & Gibson. Solona West housing units will have an average rent of \$1,692/month (ranging from \$1,222 - \$1,878 a month) with a total of 185 housing units in two phases of construction at 80 – 110% of AMI (average median income).
- The View @ Sunport will be constructed in 4 phases yielding a total of 254 housing units with an average rent of \$1,993 (ranging from \$1,795 - \$2,190 a month).

Chair Rael asked Snyder to identify any challenges in the housing development process. Snyder said that many developers have limited knowledge about the various local and state funding sources and programs and that there is a bottleneck with permitting processes and staff turnover at the City of Albuquerque. He went on to say that recent property tax increases are a disincentive and that the City of Albuquerque affordability targets of 80% AMI do not align with workforce housing needs and leveraging incentives.

John Brooks, Chief of Programs with the NM Finance Authority, presented an overview of the Opportunity Enterprise Fund (HB195). He stated that the Fund strives to provide flexible, gap financing that is critical to accelerating below-market housing projects statewide. The Fund is a revolving loan fund that favors shorter financing durations of 20 years to maximize re-lending capacity. The maximum loan amount is \$15M per project with a 2% interest rate for rural areas and 4% interest rate for urban areas. To date there have been \$400M in applications for \$125M in available funding. Brooks stated that housing developers need permanent annual recurring funding from the legislature that they can count on. He also stated that NMFA would participate in marketing, education, and joint outreach to broaden developer awareness about programs.

Jordan Varella, City of Albuquerque, provided an overview and status update on housing projects submitted to DWS for funding. Varella emphasized the need for a centralized one stop shop for housing program information to improve developer access and project initiation. He also underscored

the need for sustained CIP (capital improvement program) funding. He stated that he will work closely with the County and NMFA to develop a unified approach for 2027 legislative funding requests.

MRGHC Executive Director update: Marcos Gonzales from Bernalillo County staff has accepted the MRGHC Executive Director position. His official start date will be August 17. Gonzales said he will be planning for ongoing stakeholder and developer engagement and education and will promote collaboration across city, county and state housing entities and programs.

The next regular meeting of the MRGHC will be August 28, 2026 at 1:30 pm at the MRCOG Board Room and virtually via Zoom.

LWVNM Housing Position: The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports current and future efforts to increase the availability of safe, decent affordable housing for moderate and low income households.

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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 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.