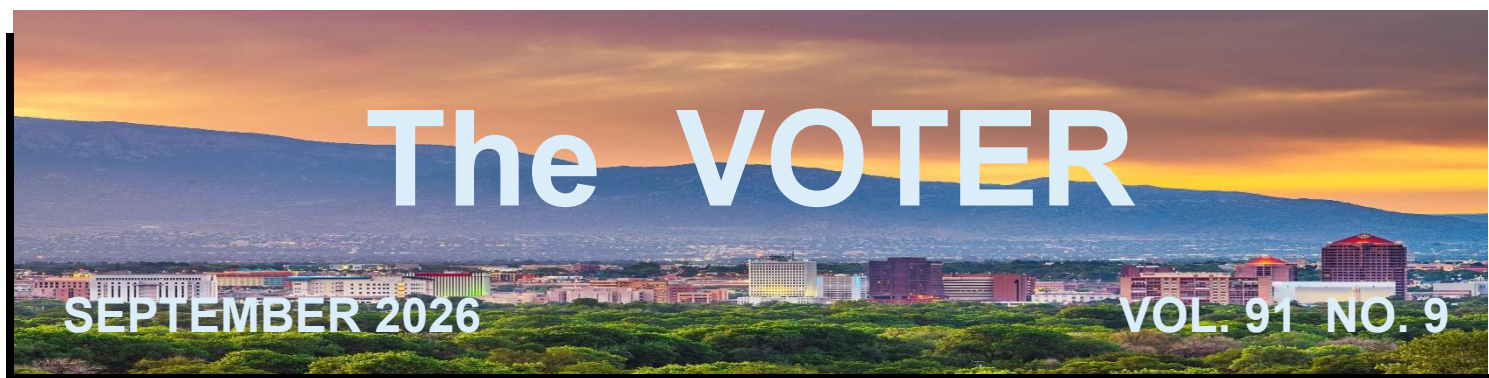




**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO**  
6739 Academy Rd. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109      lwvcnm.org      (505) 884-8441

**President's Report  
by Starlyn Brown**

**Constitution Day: The Foundation of Our Government**

**Constitution Day is Thursday, September 17.** On September 17, 1787, delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the United States Constitution, creating the framework for our federal government. The Constitution formally established the government of the United States, although the term "United States of America" had already been used in the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

The Constitution was the result of extensive debate, discussion, and compromise. The delegates had to find ways to address the differing needs and concerns of the thirteen states. One of the most important compromises created Congress as the lawmaking branch of the federal government, with the House of Representatives representing the people and the Senate representing the states.

The Constitution also established a process for adding amendments and set out how the Constitution itself would be ratified. It would take effect once nine of the thirteen states approved it through state ratifying conventions. New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the Constitution in 1788, and the new federal government began operating in 1789.

Once the new Congress was in place, attention quickly turned to adding amendments to protect individual rights. There were once again vigorous discussions and debates as members of Congress considered the concerns of their constituents and states. In September 1789, Congress proposed twelve amendments to the states. By December 15, 1791, ten of those amendments had been ratified by the required number of states. They became the **Bill of Rights**.

First Amendment — Freedom of religion, speech, the press, peaceful assembly, and petitioning the government.

Second Amendment — The right to keep and bear arms.

Third Amendment — The government cannot force people to house soldiers in their homes in peacetime. (*cont.*)

Fourth Amendment — Protection against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Fifth Amendment — Protects due process, prevents double jeopardy and forced self-incrimination, and requires fair compensation when private property is taken for public use.

Sixth Amendment — The right to a speedy and public trial, an impartial jury, and a lawyer.

Seventh Amendment — The right to a jury trial in certain civil cases.

Eighth Amendment — Protection against excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishment.

Ninth Amendment — People have rights beyond those specifically listed in the Constitution. Just because a right is not specifically listed does not mean that people do not have that right.

Tenth Amendment — Powers not given to the federal government are generally reserved to the states or the people. The federal government has only the powers given to it by the Constitution; other powers are generally left to the states or the people.

The Bill of Rights is exactly what its name says: **a statement of our rights**. It protects individual freedoms and places limits on the power of the federal government.

These rights were not created without disagreement, debate, and compromise. They remain at the heart of our democracy. **Now more than ever, we must understand our rights, defend them, and work to protect them for future generations.**



## Valencia County Fair

We were at the Valencia County Fair from August 23–29, and what a great experience! We registered voters and had the opportunity to talk with children and adults throughout the week. Everyone was very welcoming. Several children and exhibitors, ranging from 3 years old through high school, came back repeatedly to spin the civics wheel and answer questions. It created many great teaching moments and gave us the opportunity to share the importance of civics and voting.



## SEPTEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING



**Thursday, September 10<sup>TH</sup> 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

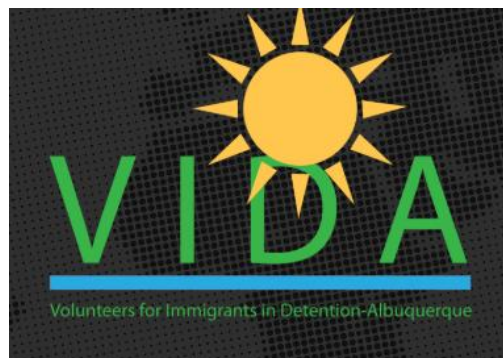
**SPEAKERS:** PATRICIA BONILLA, Volunteers for Immigrants in Detention (VIDA) Volunteer, and  
KELLY MCCLOSKEY, VIDA Volunteer Coordinator

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

The September LWVCNM Educational Meeting will feature speakers from Volunteers for Immigrants in Detention ([VIDA](#)) -- Patricia Bonilla, a VIDA Volunteer, and Kelly McCloskey, the VIDA Volunteer Coordinator, addressing the issue of immigrant detention in New Mexico.

**Pat Bonilla** has been a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL) for more than 50 years. Her students are adult immigrants from all over the world. They have taught her so much! Pat has lived for extended periods in both Ecuador (her husband's country) and Venezuela. Pat is doing a lot of volunteer work with VIDA and with Encuentro, another organization helping immigrant families. Over her years with VIDA, Pat has visited with hundreds of men in Torrance and Cibola County detention centers. With Encuentro, her main volunteer work now is tutoring students to pass their U.S. Citizenship exam. Pat says "I'm always so happy to see the LWV registering new U.S. Citizens at the swearing-in ceremonies!"

**Kelly McCloskey** will share the work that VIDA: Volunteers for Immigrants in Detention - Albuquerque and the Deportation Defense Team of the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center (NMILC) are doing at Cibola County Correctional Center in Milan and at Torrance County Detention Facility in Estancia. Recently retired from a 30-year career teaching French and Spanish, she is the coordinator of VIDA and a legal assistant for the Deportation Defense Team at NMILC.



VIDA is a group of volunteers who fight immigrant detention in New Mexico and elsewhere. There will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting to write handwritten CARDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT to men who are currently detained at the Torrance and Cibola centers. VIDA will deliver the cards on their next detention center visits.

Each day, thousands of immigrants are detained across the United States in dedicated detention centers, prisons, and jails. Most people in ICE custody are held in for-profit facilities. The United States operates the world's largest immigrant detention system. Leaders of both major political parties continue to prioritize and fund it at high levels.

Most detained immigrants are held because of their immigration status. As of February 7, 2026, 73.6% had no criminal convictions; some of the remainder had convictions only for traffic violations or other nonviolent offenses. People in ICE detention are held for unpredictable lengths of time, enduring imprisonment and isolation while facing uncertainty about their cases. VIDA volunteers provide a connection to the outside world, and they serve as observers and advocates. (*cont.*)

CoreCivic operates two New Mexico prisons that detain immigrants for ICE: Torrance County Detention Facility in Estancia and Cibola County Correctional Center in Milan. VIDA visits and supports people at both facilities, corresponds with detained immigrants nationwide, advocates on their behalf, and exposes the human rights abuses they face. This work advances the broader movement to close detention centers, end immigrant detention, and increase public awareness of its realities.

VIDA conducts participatory defense campaigns for people whom pro bono attorneys identify as wrongfully detained or otherwise treated unjustly. With the client's consent and guidance from counsel, volunteers and organizers quickly publicize the person's story and build support through petitions, appeals to ICE, outreach to members of Congress and the media, and other forms of public pressure.

Please join us to learn about this issue and the work this organization is doing on behalf of these immigrants.

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Then in October, please join LWVCNM members for our next hybrid Educational Meeting on Thursday, Oct 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 MST coordinated by Trish Lopez that will offer diverse perspectives of the NM Prison system. Panel members will include Stacy Burleson, Executive Director, Women in Leadership NM Inc, formerly incarcerated and now serving as a community leader, and Keri Thiel, Deputy Director of the NM Sentencing Commission.

### **Voter Guide Committee Report**

The LWVCNM Voter Guide planning for the November 3<sup>rd</sup> General Election is well underway. We are working to update candidate information on VOTE411 – inviting new candidates to participate, and providing an opportunity for candidates who participated in the primary to revise their responses. We are also working to assemble information on the state bonds, constitutional amendments, and other measures that will appear on the ballot.

Ballot issues have been a particular challenge this year as the Albuquerque City Council voted to place an issue to amend the city charter on the ballot, the mayor vetoed it, the council failed to override, and we are awaiting its next meeting for any changes. Special thanks to Mary Henrie Smith who is reviewing the constitutional amendment pros and cons.

Volunteers have been working to call candidates and to identify sites to stock Guides. We are also preparing a flyer to distribute in the communities to publicize the *Voter Guide*.

We plan to create two separate *Voter Guides* again: one for Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties and another for Torrance and Valencia Counties, as we did in the primary. We should have the printed versions available during the first week of October and will be seeking volunteers to assist with delivery and distribution to sites in all four counties.

Anyone who is interested in helping can contact Lani Desaulniers, Linda Miller, or Ellen Kelly.

--Lani Desaulniers & the Voter Guide Committee



# *The LWVCNM Book Club*

**New members are always welcome!**

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

New members are always welcome! If you are not able to 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.

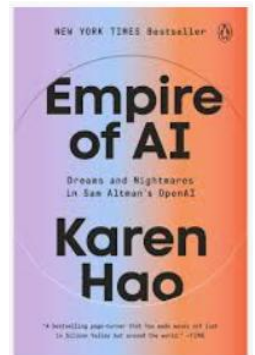
## **Next Gathering:**

**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 18<sup>th</sup> - 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**

## Fun & Creativity with LWVCNM



Happy Hour!

&



Painting with  
Kelly Jo!



## ***LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS***

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Starlyn Brown

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**Director/Civic Education:** Liz Shields

**Director/Outreach:** Kit Rosewater

**Advocacy Team/Observer Corps:**  
Karen Wentworth

**Voter Guide Distribution:**  
Ellen Kelly

If you need help with Zoom,  
please reach out to Zoom host, Linda Miller,  
[lmiller@unm.edu](mailto:lmiller@unm.edu)

Please submit your articles for the monthly Voter by  
the 15th of each month to Michal Mudd at:  
[VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com](mailto:VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com)

## ***LWVCNM CALENDAR***

Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> ( Wednesday) 5:30 pm  
**LWVCNM Board Meeting,**  
**ZOOM until further notice.**  
**All members welcome.**

September 9<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) 4:30  
**Happy Hour**  
**Nexus Brewery**  
**4730 Pan American Fwy NE, Albuquerque,**  
**NM 87109**  
**See info pg.2**

September 10<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 12 Noon  
**LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting**  
**In person and ZOOM**  
**Topic: Immigrant Detention in New Mexico**  
**Speakers:** Patricia Bonilla, Volunteer with  
Volunteers for Immigrants in Detention (VIDA)  
and Kelly McCloskey, VIDA Volunteer  
Coordinator

Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> (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**  
**See info p. 6**

There are too many Events in September to  
list them all! The calendar is on our home  
page [lwvcnm.org](http://lwvcnm.org)  
Please Take a Look!

Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> ( Wednesday) 5:30 pm  
**LWVCNM Board Meeting,**  
**ZOOM until further notice.**  
**All members welcome.**

# **OBSERVER REPORTS**



## **Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting August 3, 2026 Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick**

All councilors attended the 3 Aug 2026 meeting: Stephanie Telles – District 1, Joaquin Baca – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5 (excused for the last part of the meeting), Nichole Rogers – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Dan Champine – District 8, Renée Grout, District 9

### **General Information**

At the Aug 3rd meeting, public comment time was limited to one minute per speaker. Twenty-three names were called for the General Public Comment period, which began at 8:20pm. There were seven no-shows. One of the speakers commented that he had watched all the meetings from this year and made a recommendation that the Council limit meeting agendas to prevent late meetings. Indeed, this Aug 3rd meeting continued until 12:24am. Toward the end, there was procedural confusion as the Councilors became fatigued, and several commented on their tiredness.

Prior to the Public Comment Period, the Councilors spent twenty-six minutes in Executive Session, leaving the room to discuss a personnel matter pertaining to the Inspector General's investigation of the City Attorney.

### **Proposed Ballot Measure to Increase Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) – Again [R-26-58](#)**

A proposal sponsored by Council President Peña to present a ballot measure to the voters to increase the GRT was removed from the agenda by a vote of seven (Baca, Champine, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis Rogers, Telles) to two (Bassan, Peña). The proposed measure would have asked voters to approve a GRT increase to fund community enhancement projects and municipal operations, including employee wages. This proposal varied only slightly from a ballot measure that was voted down at the Jun 15th meeting ([R-26-3](#)) and a proposed ordinance that was voted down at the Mar 16th meeting ([O-26-16](#)).

### **Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) – Sawmill Hotel; Vote Deferred – Again [O-26-38](#)**

At the Aug 3rd meeting, the Council voted again to postpone consideration of a \$40M Industrial Revenue Bond for the Dreamcatcher Sawmill Hotel. Public commenters included employees of the developer (Sun Capital Hotels), touting them as a good employer, and patrons of the developer's other hotels who praised them as a good business partner. Opponents objected to the lack of a traffic study and the height of the proposed building (5 stories). Councilor Baca proposed a postponement of the vote until the Aug 17th Council meeting to allow the developer to meet with the neighborhood residents.

## Proposed Ballot Measure to Amend City Charter re: Appointment of City Attorney and City Clerk

### P-26-2

The City Council passed a proposal and related resolution to place an amendment to the City Charter on the November ballot. The amendment makes changes to the appointment, removal, and independence of the City Attorney and City Clerk.

The amendment:

- adds a statement that the City Attorney and City Clerk are independent of, but accountable to, the Mayor and the Council;
- specifies a timeline for the Mayor's appointment of the positions: 90 days;
- provides that the Mayor appoints, confirmed by two-thirds of the Council;
- limits the time an interim may serve: 270 days;
- the Mayor can terminate with affirmative vote of five members of the council;
- the Council may terminate with vote of seven members; and
- the Mayor or Council (seven members) can terminate an interim with notice to other body.

Councilors voting in favor of the proposed ballot measure: Baca, Champine, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, and Telles. Councilors voting against: Bassan, Peña, and Rogers.



### **Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission**

**August 11, 2026**

**Karen Wentworth**

### **An Experiment in Advocacy**

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

The Bernalillo County Commission introduced a charter amendment in June to allow the county to publicly finance campaigns for qualifying candidates. The League strongly supports public financing as a way to reduce the influence of private donations in campaigns, but this charter amendment seemed backwards. It would have allowed the charter change, but there was no information available to tell voters how much it might cost.

A resolution accompanying the charter amendment proposal set up a committee to examine the potential cost to the county and report back in August 2027, months after voters had to make a decision. That process didn't give voters the information they needed to make a considered decision. So, Starlyn Brown and I worked on a letter to the commission asking them to withdraw the proposal until the financial repercussion study could be complete. Starlyn sent it to all commissioners and the county manager.

Starlyn didn't receive feedback on the letter from the four democratic commissioners or the county manager, but the Republican member of the Commission, Walt Benson, used the letter as a springboard for an op-ed he sent to The Paper and the Albuquerque Journal, noting how the county

was forced to limit raises for county employees because of tight finances, but wanted to give money to politicians with this charter amendment. He noted the League's concerns in his opinion editorial. We didn't think the Commission would react, but to our surprise Commissioner Eric Olivas, who introduced the proposed amendment, emailed Starlyn that he would withdraw the amendment.

Starlyn went to the commission on August 11 to publicly thank Olivas for his decision to withdraw the amendment from the ballot. It's not often that public officials decide to reverse a course they have set, but we are grateful that the Commissioners rethought this particular issue. We may see the amendment proposal on the 2028 ballot, but by then voters will at least know the financial implications of their vote.

Relevant League Position:

*"The LWVNM supports a fair, equitable and reasonable combination of public/private funding of campaigns for New Mexico state elective offices. Participation in public/private financing should be voluntary. Participants should agree to voluntary spending limits. The legislation should provide for a source of revenue to fund the program."*



## **Sandoval County Commission regular meeting**

**July 22, 2026**

**Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)**

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

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

### General Obligation Bonds for 2026

In November, Sandoval County will ask the public for funding for three projects as follows:

1. Libraries: ask \$3.4M
2. Fire Training Facility: ask \$9M
3. Bureau of Elections Building: ask \$22M

No language was presented for these ballot questions at this time.

Additional Comments

### Sandoval County Cooperative Extension Program Update

With respect to family services, the Program offers initiatives around

- Mental health education & coaching
- Health & wellness (Nutrition 101, Kitchen Creation classes for diabetics, senior exercise)
- Food security and preservation, since much fresh food distributed by food banks goes into compost or to animals because people don't know how to use it (Garden table-to-pantry program: how to grow, cook and preserve fresh produce, canning center).

## Public Comment

Eight of ten speakers asked the Commission to withdraw their resolution of support for Sandia Pueblo to request that Congress transfer T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area land from US Forest Service to Bureau of Indian Affairs management. The public was concerned that the request would reduce their access to the wilderness.

As background, I was unable to find a citation to Sandia Pueblo's request to Congress, but its content appears to be evolving based on a New Mexico Political Report article published here.

Sandoval County Commission Website  
<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



## **Sandoval County Commission regular meeting**

**August 12, 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:

### General Obligation Bonds for 2026

The Commission approved ballot language for its three General Obligation Bond questions for the November 3, 2026 General Election. The questions appear in items 11.A,B,C of the agenda.

### Additional Comments:

### Sandoval County Salary Commission

The Commission appointed members to serve on the Sandoval County Salary Commission.

### Public Comment:

Eight speakers spoke to oppose the Commission's support of Sandia Pueblo's request to Congress to transfer T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area land from US Forest Service to Bureau of Indian Affairs management.

Sandoval County Commission Website  
<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



**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.**