

ELECTION 2024

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Los Alamos Voter Guide 2024 General Election

Prepared by the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization for men and women, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

As a non-partisan organization, the League does not support, oppose, or make recommendations regarding any political party or candidate.

Essential Dates

Voter Registration Closes

Tuesday, October 8: Applications must be received by 5 p.m. at the County Clerk's office in the Los Alamos County Municipal Building or on-line through the NM Secretary of State Portal (NMVote.org) by 11:59 p.m. **This is the final date you can change your affiliation from one major party to another.**

Same Day, In-person Voter Registration. The voter must register and vote on the same day in this period.

Tuesday, October 8 thru Friday, October 18: Monday thru Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 19 thru Saturday, Nov. 2 Monday thru Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuesday, November 5, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Absentee Voting by Mail

Tuesday, October 8: Absentee ballots will begin to be mailed out.

Registered voters wishing to vote absentee by mail must request an absentee ballot application. The last day to request an absentee ballot is **October 22**. You can request your absentee ballot in person, download a mailable form from the Clerk's website, or apply online at NMVote.org. Absentee ballots can be dropped off at any scheduled polling

place during voting hours or at the County Clerk's office. Absentee ballots must be received at the Clerk's office by 7 p.m. **November 5.**

Early Voting in Person

Tuesday, October 8 thru Friday, October 18: Monday thru Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Los Alamos County Municipal Building
- Council Chambers

Early Voting in Person (continued)

Saturday, Oct. 19 thru Saturday, Nov. 2: Monday thru Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Los Alamos County Municipal Building
- Council Chambers
White Rock Town Hall – Training Rooms

Monday, November 4 - Voting is CLOSED

Election Day, Tuesday, November 5.

Vote Centers open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Registered voters of Los Alamos County may vote at **any** of the following Vote Centers on Election Day:

Los Alamos County Municipal Building
- Council Chambers
White Rock Town Hall – Conference Training Rooms
Golf Course Community Building – Multi-Purpose Room
Betty Ehart Senior Center – Downstairs Classroom
University of New Mexico-Los Alamos – Building 2, Room 230

Voting Information

You **must be registered to vote by Oct. 8** (Nov. 5 if using same-day in-person registration) to vote in this election. If you have moved or changed your address or your party affiliation, you should re-register to vote. The County Clerk's office is in the County Municipal Building at 1000 Central Ave, Suite 240, 505-662-8010. Application may be made in person, by mail, or online.

For **same-day in-person voter registration only**, the applicant must appear

in person at the County Clerk's office or at any scheduled voting site, and immediately before voting shall provide one of the following:

- a New Mexico driver's license or New Mexico identification card;
- any document that contains an address in the county together with a photo identification card; or
- a current valid student photo identification card from a post-secondary educational institution in New Mexico accompanied by a current student fee statement that contains the student's address in the county.

For **mail-in registration only**, if the applicant is registering **for the first time in New Mexico**, he or she must submit a copy of one of the following types of identification showing both the name and the New Mexico address of the applicant:

- a current and valid photo ID such as a driver's license (note that the DMV can issue similar IDs to non-drivers)
- a utility bill
- a bank statement
- a government check, paycheck or other government document.

No identification is required if a voter is merely changing their registration (name, address and/or party affiliation) within the state of New Mexico.

The on-line portal (www.NMVote.org) is only available to those individuals who have been issued a New Mexico Driver's License or Identification Card.

When voting at the Vote Center, you will be asked for your name, address as registered, and year of birth. If you cannot provide this information orally, or if you registered by mail, you will be asked for one of the above forms of identification. With the exceptions noted above, no physical voter identification is required at the poll.

Sample ballots will be available at the County Clerk's office, at the County Libraries, at the Senior Centers, and online

at www.losalamosnm.us/clerk or www.NMVote.org.

Since electioneering within 100 feet of polling places is prohibited, and since displaying buttons, t-shirts, hats, or other such items is considered electioneering, voters are reminded not to display these items when voting at any Early Voting site or Vote Center.

Information Online

The LWVLA General Election Voter Guide 2024 is available at www.lwvlosalamos.org. You can also visit the website VOTE411.org for an interactive look at your ballot and all of the candidates' responses.

Local voting information is available on the Los Alamos County Clerk's website at www.losalamosnm.us/clerk.

Candidate Responses to Questions from the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos sent questionnaires to all Los Alamos candidates for the 2024 General Election, and all candidates are reported here.

Because of space restrictions, the League advised the candidates that the length of the responses would be limited. The responses of candidates are printed as received by the League other than possibly being truncated at the maximum permitted length or removing excess white spaces. We have in no way edited for meaning, grammar, or spelling. The League assumes no responsibility for the content of any candidate's reply.

In this Voter Guide, candidates are listed in ballot order. Candidate order within each office was determined by a public alphabet randomization.

Thanks

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The Los Alamos County Clerk’s office and the Secretary of State’s office provided necessary and helpful information.

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Candidate Questions and Answers

President and Vice President of the United States

The President of the United States is the head of state and head of government of the United States of America. The president directs the executive branch of the federal government and is the commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces.

- Kamala D Harris and Timothy Walz (Democratic Party)**
- Laura Ebke and Trisha Butler (Liberal Party USA Party)**
- Robert F Kennedy, Jr and Nicole Shanahan (No Party Affiliation)**
- Chase Oliver and Mike Ter Maat (Libertarian Party)**
- Jill Stein and Rudolph Ware (Green Party)**
- Donald J Trump and JD Vance (Republican Party)**
- Claudia De La Cruz and Karina Garcia (Socialism and Liberation Party)**

United States Senator

Candidates must be at least 30 years old, a citizen of the United States at least nine years, and a resident of the state from which elected. The United States Senate has 100 members. Two United States Senators are elected to six-year staggered terms by the entire state. One New Mexico Senate seat is up for election this year.



Martin Heinrich (Democratic Party)

1. Why do you want to run for this seat?

As your Senator, we’ve

passed legislation to deliver unprecedented investments for our children, our working families, and our seniors in New Mexico. Because of these investments, we’ve begun to see costs for things like groceries and prescription drugs go down and our economy grow, I’m running for reelection to the Senate because we still have more work to do, from tackling climate change to expanding access to health care to ensure that every New Mexican has the opportunity to thrive.

2. What are the most important issues facing Congress in the next two years?

If reelected, my priorities will be to grow rural economies, reduce costs for New Mexico families, raise workers’ wages, expand access to health care, protect the rights of workers, and tackle climate change while creating high-quality jobs.

3. How would you address them?

We should build on the Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Law, and CHIPS and Science Act that we’ve passed into law and New Mexico is starting to feel the impacts of. The Inflation Reduction Act is bringing jobs to rural New Mexico, especially in clean energy manufacturing. The Inflation Reduction Act also lowered costs for prescriptions for seniors on Medicare and is making health insurance more affordable. The

Infrastructure Law is bringing billions of dollars to New Mexico to rebuild roads, bridges, and energy infrastructure, and the CHIPS Act is bringing thousands of good paying jobs to expand manufacturing and strengthen our national security. Now it’s time to ensure every New Mexican can access the benefits of these historic laws.

4. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding immigration?

We need solutions, not political stunts. We need to tackle the huge backlog of lawful immigration, so it doesn’t take years for a person’s paperwork to be processed. And we need to invest in smart border security technology that detects and stops drugs like fentanyl before they get into our communities. We need to staff and support the law enforcement agencies at our border that are helping to maintain our national security and efficiently process cross-border trade with our largest trade partner, Mexico. We need more pathways for skilled immigrants eager to fill labor shortages in industries with severe workforce shortages, like agriculture and health care. And we need to finally ensure DREAMers have a swift path to full citizenship.

5. What, if anything, would you do to improve the functioning of Congress?

Congress should pass legislation to get dark money out of our elections and give the American people transparency into who is attempting to influence their votes. Additionally, the Senate should end the filibuster to prevent a single Senator from disrupting the Democratic process and ensure working people in America have a real seat at the table in Washington.

Nella Louise Domenici

(Republican Party)

NO RESPONSE RECEIVED

United States Representative, District 3

Candidates must be at least 25 years old, a United States citizen of seven years, and a resident of New Mexico. The United States House of Representatives has 435 members of which New Mexico is entitled to three. They serve two-year terms. District 3 includes Los Alamos, Santa Fe, and most of the northern part of the state.



Teresa Leger Fernandez (Democratic Party)

1. Why do you want to run for this seat?

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that God’s

plan is for us to prosper, have hope and a future. My job in Congress is to help create that prosperity, hope and future for NM by creating opportunity and investing in hard-working families. I’m running for reelection because I want to continue to fight for our communities. In Congress, I have secured billions in funding for infrastructure, broadband, manufacturing; millions for community projects, including clean water projects; invested the most in rural America since the New Deal; passed the largest climate investments in U.S. history, and lowered prescription drug prices. I represent New Mexicans, regardless of party, and I know that together we can build a prosperous, hopeful future for us all.

2. What are the most important



issues facing Congress in the next two years?

We must expand access and bring down energy and health care costs. We must address income inequality where the wealthiest CEOs and corporations don't pay their fair share. We must make housing affordable so our families can live in the communities they love. We also face a grave threat to our democracy as the Republican presidential candidate has denied election results, proclaimed he would be a dictator on day one, and would seek revenge on political opponents. We must protect women's freedom to reproductive health care. Women need health care, not handcuffs. We must also address Social Security to ensure the promise we have made to working Americans who have paid into the system is kept for generations to come.

3. How would you address them?

I'd lower healthcare costs by expanding prescription drug caps, increasing access to healthcare in rural NM, and strengthening the Affordable Care Act. The wealthiest and corporations must pay their fair share and we must make the Child Tax Credit permanent. I've introduced a Home Of Your Own Act and funded homeownership programs for NM. To protect democracy and voting rights we must pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the key provisions in it I authored for tribal voters. I cosponsored the Women's Health Protection Act and will fight Republicans' attempt to enact a federal abortion ban. I cosponsored Social Security 2100, which would have the wealthiest pay Social Security taxes, increase benefits, and keep the program solvent.

4. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding immigration?

We need to reform our broken immigration system, which includes strengthening the security of our borders and providing a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and law-abiding undocumented workers currently in our country. Reforming our immigration system would be a \$1.3 trillion dollar benefit to the US economy. My first year in Congress the House passed on a bipartisan

basis the American Dream and Promise Act and the Farm Worker Modernization Act, and the No Ban Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion. Sadly, extreme Republicans blocked these bipartisan measures and recently House Republicans and Trump killed another bipartisan border deal. We need solutions not political maneuvering on this important issue.

5. What, if anything, would you do to improve the functioning of Congress?

I was trained as a rebellious lawyer. Which means, I was trained to listen. I have taken this with me to Congress - where I both bring the voices and learnings of our NM communities and do the work to listen to my colleagues and find common ground where possible. The more we listen to each other, the more I believe we can get done. The vast majority of the legislation I have introduced and passed in the House and into law was bipartisan. Fundamentally, though - we also must recognize that the functioning of our Congress is tied to our access to democracy. We must protect and reform our democracy and ensure that every single eligible voter can access the ballot box. That is how we ensure that our democracy works for all of us.



Sharon E. Clahchischiliage
(Republican Party)

1. Why do you want to run for this seat?

There is a lack of representation

in preserving the voice and livelihood of New Mexico constituents from out of touch politicians and failed leadership.

2. What are the most important issues facing Congress in the next two years?

Inflation, over regulation, decline of quality education, affordable and available health services, effective land management, water and agricultural

advocacy and the funnel orchestrated by the progressive agenda, at the border.

3. How would you address them?

Advocate for minimizing over regulation, shutting down the border, and only allowing for strict, vetted legal immigration. This will stop illegal human and drug trafficking that are destroying New Mexico's communities.

4. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding immigration?

Address the laws regarding the border and enforce them.

5. What, if anything, would you do to improve the functioning of Congress?

Win the Congressional District 3 election! Encourage congressional members to minimize their obsessions with personal agendas and concentrate on addressing the needs of their constituents.

NM State Senator District 5

There are 42 members in the New Mexico Senate. All seats will be filled in the 2024 election. In addition to other duties prescribed by law, senators enact "reasonable and appropriate laws," represent the constituents of their district, and serve on standing or interim committees. The legislature meets each year beginning in January. In odd-numbered years, it meets for 60 days; in even-numbered years, it meets for 30 days. The Governor may call special sessions. Candidates must be at least 25 years old and must be a resident of the district from which elected. They serve a four-year term. Senators do not receive a salary, but they do receive a pre-set per diem. Los Alamos is split into two Senate Districts. Senate District 5 includes Los Alamos townsite. Senate District 6 includes White Rock.



Leo Jaramillo
(Democratic Party)

1. How can New Mexico improve access to physical and mental

health care services?

There are so many New Mexicans who do not have adequate access to healthcare and others who are finding themselves in medical debt. As a legislature, we need to expand and protect access to healthcare, including protecting pre-existing conditions, while also keeping out-of-pocket healthcare costs down. When it comes to mental health care, we need to treat it as we do physical health care. We need to embed behavioral health care specialists within the primary care setting.

2. What legislation would you support to reduce violent crime and improve public safety?

I would support legislation which prioritize rehabilitation programs to improve safety. Legislation which would establish incentives for eligible incarcerated individuals to participate in job and educational training, which has been proven not only to better prepare people leaving prison for the workforce, but also to reduce recidivism, save taxpayer dollars, and increase public safety. States like Minnesota and Ohio have seen an up to 20 percent drop in recidivism for people who participated.

3. How can we protect New Mexico's economic future considering the reduced availability of water?

The state needs to develop a strategy which will require coordination with local, tribal, and federal partners to assist in developing new water through recycling and desalination while also improving all water management actions with better data, forecasting, conveyance, and administration of water rights. I believe it is critical that New Mexico must invest in water recycling projects.

4. Do you support a paid legislature and/or longer legislative sessions? Why or why not?

I support a paid legislature and served as the Senate Sponsor of the house bill two years ago which proposed a constitutional amendment which would provide legislative salaries. I believe that a paid legislature would make elected office more accessible to people of limited economic means which would help us

diversify the House and Senate. I also support a longer legislative session. Longer session would allocate adequate time to write, debate and pass new laws.

5. What are the biggest problems facing New Mexico? How can they be addressed?

Affordable housing is a major issue we are facing in New Mexico. We must continue to invest in the Casa Connection Grant Program which provides housing for vulnerable populations, addressing homelessness and removing barriers to affordable housing. Fentanyl is also a major crisis; Increase access to mental health care and in preventing and treating opioid addiction, with funding for community-based prevention and treatment efforts, expanding health care instructor, and harm reduction services.

NM State Senator District 6

There are 42 members in the New Mexico Senate. All seats will be filled in the 2024 election. In addition to other duties prescribed by law, senators enact “reasonable and appropriate laws,” represent the constituents of their district, and serve on standing or interim committees. The legislature meets each year beginning in January. In odd-numbered years, it meets for 60 days; in even-numbered years, it meets for 30 days. The Governor may call special sessions. Candidates must be at least 25 years old and must be a resident of the district from which elected. They serve a four-year term. Senators do not receive a salary, but they do receive a pre-set per diem. Los Alamos is split into two Senate Districts. Senate District 5 includes Los Alamos townsite. Senate District 6 includes White Rock.



Roberto ‘Bobby’ Jesse Gonzales (Democratic Party)

1. How can New Mexico improve access to physical and

mental health care services?

To improve healthcare access in New Mexico: - Invest in healthcare facilities and tech statewide. - Expand telemedicine and broadband. - Offer incentives for providers in underserved areas. - Support small practices with reduced insurance requirements and streamlined regulatory processes. - Fund community health centers. - Promote health education and outreach. - Train providers in cultural competency. - Advocate for better insurance and Medicaid coverage for mental health and telemedicine.

2. What legislation would you support to reduce violent crime and improve public safety?

To reduce violent crime and improve safety in New Mexico, I support: - Funding law enforcement and community programs targeted regionally. - Ensuring repeat offenders are effectively incarcerated. - Expanding job training, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and housing for those reentering society following incarceration. - Using evidence to guide crime policies and resource allocation. - Fostering trust and accountability between law enforcement and residents.

3. How can we protect New Mexico’s economic future considering the reduced availability of water?

To protect New Mexico’s economic future amid reduced water availability: - Sustainable Development: Focus on projects like renewable energy and water-efficiency. - Infrastructure Investment: Upgrade water storage, distribution, and treatment systems. - Incentivize water-saving technologies and water management. - Economic Diversification: Support industries that use less water. - Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborate to enhance resource use and project efficiency.

4. Do you support a paid legislature and/or longer legislative sessions? Why or why not?

I support a paid legislature as well as longer sessions for effective governance. Paying legislators ensures diverse, equitable representation and allows legislators to fully commit to

public service. Longer sessions provide time for thorough research, debate, and decision-making on complex issues, leading to well-informed policies. These measures enhance responsiveness and inclusivity in the legislative process, benefiting all New Mexicans with thoughtful and effective governance.

5. What are the biggest problems facing New Mexico? How can they be addressed?

Including healthcare access, water scarcity, and crime/public safety, New Mexico faces challenges that can be addressed through policies and cross-sector collaboration: -Education: Boost funding, enhance teacher training, and address disparities; - Economic Diversification: Promote renewable energy, tech sectors, and support small businesses; - Poverty & Inequality: Invest in affordable housing, healthcare, and job training; - Infrastructure: Modernize roads, bridges, broadband, and public transport.

NM State Representative District 43

There are 70 members of the N.M. House of Representatives. All seats will be filled in the 2024 election. In addition to other duties prescribed by law, representatives enact “reasonable and appropriate laws,” represent the constituents of their district, and serve on standing or interim committees. The legislature meets each year beginning in January. In odd-numbered years, it meets for 60 days; in even-numbered years, it meets for 30 days. The Governor may call special sessions. Candidates must be at least 21 years old and must be a resident of the district from which elected. They serve a two-year term. Representatives do not receive a salary, but they do receive a pre-set per diem and mileage. The 43rd District includes Los Alamos and parts of Sandoval and Santa Fe Counties.



Christine Chandler (Democratic Party)

1. How can New Mexico improve access to physical and mental health care services?

Long-standing challenges require multi-pronged, coordinated policy initiatives. The legislature is addressing the provider shortage, but more needs to be done. Implementing measures that include: student loan forgiveness programs that encourage providers to locate in areas with the most need; expanded tax credits for critically needed providers; expanded educational programs to increase the number of New Mexicans training for all medical professions. Incentive and retention strategies are key.

2. What legislation would you support to reduce violent crime and improve public safety?

Improve Extreme Risk Protection Order law and train police on its effective use. Enact other gun safety laws shown to reduce gun violence. Prioritize incarceration of the truly dangerous and implement alternate sentencing and diversion programs that provide drug and behavioral health treatment, and job training. Focus on programs that are evidence-based and data driven. The data and evidence have shown us that the so-called tough on crime proposals fail us time and time again.

3. How can we protect New Mexico’s economic future considering the reduced availability of water?

Enact laws that regulate and minimize access to and use of excessively large quantities of fresh water by industrial users by encouraging alternatives. This could include desalination initiatives and produced water reuse in the oil fields. Complete an assessment of water availability and implement regional water plans that address water use on a regional basis and tied to the conditions relevant to the area. The state is acting



on inadequate data which hampers its ability to plan effectively.

4. Do you support a paid legislature and/or longer legislative sessions? Why or why not?

Yes. New Mexico is the only state in the country with an unpaid, volunteer legislature. Many citizens cannot afford to leave their jobs for extended periods to serve. As a result, we lack an elected body that reflects the economic and ethnic diversity that would include many more perspectives and life experiences. Longer sessions will improve the legislature's ability to study and debate legislation. We need to eliminate the governor's exclusive role in setting the short session agenda.

5. What are the biggest problems facing New Mexico? How can they be addressed?

Poverty is the underlying cause of nearly every challenge facing New Mexico and its citizens. The legislature is addressing it through an array of efforts that include increasing support for low income families, Pre-K, early childhood and child care programs. The state is a leader in implementing changes to the tax code in ways that support working families. This includes the Working Families Tax Credit and the Child Income Tax Credit, measures that have been shown to reduce poverty.

Public Education Commissioner District 4

The Public Education Commission is a ten-person commission that is advisory to the Secretary of Education. The Commission authorizes and monitors all state-chartered charter schools. Commissioners must reside in the district he/she represents. There are four-year staggered terms. Districts 1, 4, 8, 9 and 10 are up for election in 2024.



Rebekka Kay Burt
(Democratic Party)

1. Why are charter schools necessary?

Charter schools offer families and

students the freedom to choose the educational environment that best suits their needs, regardless of financial status or residential location. In New Mexico, all charters are tuition-free and public, ensuring accessibility to diverse educational programs not typically found in traditional neighborhood schools. This expands opportunities for students and promotes equity in education.

2. What experience do you have that gives you insight into whether to charter a new school or renew a charter school?

With experience as a middle school English teacher and working in the Public Education Department, I've gained firsthand insight into the positive impact of high expectations on student achievement. I've visited numerous schools across NM, distinguishing between successful and struggling institutions. This background equips me to assess whether to charter a new school or renew an existing one based on their potential to meet student needs and deliver quality education.

3. What criteria are most important in evaluating new or existing charter schools?

The most important criteria in evaluating new or existing charter schools include academic performance, student growth and achievement, adherence to educational standards, curriculum quality, teacher qualifications and retention, parent and community satisfaction, financial stability, and overall organizational effectiveness. These factors collectively ensure that charter schools are providing high-quality education and effectively serving their students and communities.

District Attorney 1st Judicial District

New Mexico District Courts handle civil suits involving real estate or claims over \$10,000, juvenile cases, divorce and child custody, criminal felony cases, and appeals from lower courts. The 1st Judicial District of New Mexico includes Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe Counties. District Attorneys serve a four-year term.



Mary Virginia Carmack-Altwhies
(Democratic Party)

1. What are your qualifications for this position?

I have had the honor of serving as New Mexico's First Judicial District Attorney since January 2021. With expertise in criminal law, I have seen both sides of the courtroom, working as a public defender and running my own practice. As DA, I carry a caseload and have prosecuted all kinds of cases. Since I took office, we have: Won over 95% of our homicide and violent crime prosecutions, including cases against child abusers, sex offenders, and rapists. Increased our DWI conviction rate to over 85%. When I took office, the DA's office had a DWI conviction rate of under 40%. Cleared years-old backlogs in rape kit prosecutions, police-involved shootings, and homicides. I am a graduate of University of New Mexico School of Law.

2. What are your highest priorities for this office?

We have turned around the District Attorney's office in three years time, and I want to expand on the work we have started and develop new programs and processes to keep our community safe. We especially need to increase prosecution and sentencing for gun crimes and address mental health challenges. We've had such incredible success winning cases with our complex crime unit that we're expanding it to include a greater number of crimes. To combat crime at its root, we're starting a

juvenile justice project that will give wraparound services to juveniles to keep them out of our criminal justice system as adults. True to my campaign promise in 2020, we've also expanded diversion programs and plan to continue their expansion and effectiveness.

3. How do you intend to accomplish them?

We've cleaned up outdated systems and implemented modernized, effective systems that will enable us to accomplish the work we set out to do. I intend to continue to implement the most effective systems to ensure our work is impactful. I'm working to implement systems that also will allow us to integrate with our law enforcement and community partners. We need to fight violent crime by getting guns out of the hands of criminals and supporting common sense gun violence prevention. We must work with the legislature to secure more funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment.

I am working to secure more funding to ensure we are paying attorneys and staff competitively to recruit and retain the best and brightest in the field.

4. What, if any, alternatives to incarceration do you support for nonviolent crimes?

First, to be clear: violent crimes must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law to keep violent criminals off the streets. Non-violent crimes are often symptoms of societal issues like poverty, homelessness, behavioral health, and substance use. After I took office, we expanded diversion programs to pre-trial, pre-sentencing, and post-sentencing diversion and expanded our diversion partners. We will continue to pursue new partners for diversion and work to ensure diversion is used in all cases where it will be beneficial. As stated above, we need to work with the Legislature to secure more treatment for mental health and substance abuse. Treatment is not possible if no beds are available.

Los Alamos County Clerk

The Los Alamos County Clerk's office handles voter registration and runs elec-



tions. It is also responsible for recording and filing public documents, issuing marriage licenses, maintaining official documents for the County Council such as Ordinances, Resolutions, and Council Minutes and serves as Clerk to the Probate Court. The County Clerk serves a four-year term.



Michael D Redondo (Democratic Party)

1. What do you consider to be the greatest challenges for the Office of the County

Clerk?

Of the many challenges facing the Office of the County Clerk, I plan to focus on confirming that our elections are being conducted in a way that is free, fair, and transparent. I have also noticed that there has been high turnover in staff at the Clerk’s office; I propose to find ways to improve staff retention so that we do not lose the experience and institutional knowledge required to serve the community at the highest level.

2. How do your abilities, experience, and education prepare you for this office?

I served as the Los Alamos County Probate Judge for four and a half years. The County Clerk serves as the Clerk of the Probate Court, and as a result the Probate Court is co-located in the Clerk’s office. I have worked closely with the clerk and the staff in the Clerk’s office. Furthermore, I have worked as a poll worker so I understand the support election workers require to effectively conduct elections.

3. How can we reassure voters that their vote is secure, is private, and will be counted?

The best way to reassure voters that their vote is secure, private, and counted is to have as many of them as possible participate in the process. This means not just voting, but serving as poll workers, election watchers, witnessing

the certification of voting machines, or serving on the canvass board. There is no better way to gain confidence in the process than to work alongside the dedicated people who ensure that our elections are free and fair.

4. What can the County Clerk’s office do to enhance voter interest and participation in the voting process?

The best thing that the Clerk’s office can do to enhance voter interest and participation is to make it as easy and convenient as possible to vote.

Los Alamos County Councilor

The Los Alamos County Council is the County’s governing body and was created by the Los Alamos County Charter. The Council consists of seven members elected at large for four-year staggered terms. Three seats will be filled in the 2024 election by the three candidates receiving the most votes. The County Council generally holds two regular sessions per month, plus one work session. Its members also serve as liaisons with the County’s Boards and Commissions and other governmental entities.



Beverly Neal-Clinton (Democratic Party)

1. Why are small businesses not thriving in Los Alamos? What can the County do to

help?

Two issues come to mind. A lack of Market Demand - Businesses may misjudge the market, launching products or services that don’t have sufficient demand. One solution is the County can conduct thorough market research to understand customer needs, preferences, and trends. Use feedback to refine offerings. Poor Financial Management leads to inadequate cash flow, overspending, or lack of funding can cripple businesses. Poor budgeting and lack of financial management and funding opportunities.

2. What does County transparency

mean to you and how can it be improved?

To me, County transparency means open, accessible, and accountable governance that allows residents to see and understand what their local government is doing, how decisions are made, and how public funds are allocated and used. Transparency fosters trust by ensuring that information about county operations, policies, and finances is easily available, understandable, and timely, enabling citizens to actively participate in the democratic process.

3. What actions should the County take to make housing more affordable for the workforce (e.g. teachers, retail workers, medical staff, restaurant staff, etc.)?

Incentivize Affordable Housing Development; Utilize public land; Streamline zoning process and regulations; Support renter and home buyers by providing assistance; Expand rental assistance programs; Promote Employer-Assisted housing-To make housing more affordable for the workforce, the County could implement a comprehensive strategy that addresses both the supply and demand sides of the housing market while supporting policies that foster long-term affordability and stability.

4. Some residential and commercial properties in our County are vacant or underused. Since these are private properties, how can the County encourage better use of these properties?

To encourage better use of vacant or underused private residential and commercial properties, the County can choose any of the strategies above that leverage incentives, regulations, partnerships, and community engagement. The County could offer incentives for redevelopment; Implement a vacancy tax or fee; Streamline permitting and zoning processes; Promote public and private partnerships; And continue the community Pop-ups.

5. What are the most important actions the County should take to make progress on protection of trails and open space as recommended by the adopted 2016 Los Alamos County

Comprehensive Plan?

There are four actions that come to mind. They are: Implement strong zoning protections; Repurpose existing facilities; Expand land acquisition and easements; Enhance trail connectivity and maintenance; Continue to promote community engagement; And secure sustainable funding.



David W Reagor (Republican Party)

1. Why are small businesses not thriving in Los Alamos? What can the County do to

help?

This election is about authoritarianism versus freedom. Our small businesses have never recovered from the Covid lockdown. At the county level we are dealing with authoritarian staff and democratic opponents that like big government. I was the only counselor to vote in favor of the Unquarcked/Sirphey appeal of the County red tag of a bar and restaurant project on Central Ave. They filed a lawsuit and have won. Turning around this attitude will require pressure and perhaps new management.

2. What does County transparency mean to you and how can it be improved?

In my first term, I lead the opposition to the GRT tax increase proposed by the county administrator. We are actually flooded with LANL GRT revenues. Several Democrats joined me in voting down the increase in 2023. They also voted this winter to put off the increase to FY 2027. During the entire debate the staff produced thorough documentation of our need for a tax increase, while the LANL GRT payments soared. This current practice is the opposite of transparency.

3. What actions should the County take to make housing more affordable for the workforce (e.g. teachers, retail workers, medical staff, restaurant

staff, etc.)?

The development of higher density housing is an important priority for the county. The LAC Affordability Housing plan is a good step in this direction. We should back that plan and develop at least 1000 new units of housing that is moderately priced. We need housing well beyond the lower income component but this is progress.

4. Some residential and commercial properties in our County are vacant or underused. Since these are private properties, how can the County encourage better use of these properties?

We have vacant and deteriorating properties: the old Hilltop House, the MariMac shopping center, and the Longview area in White Rock, that we want to redevelop. Redevelopment starts with purchasing a property, demolishing a building and then road or utility work before any construction. These costs leave a developer in a deficit compared to clean sites. We have MRA and LEDA authorities and the county needs to develop a proposal process to fairly and transparently fund these initial costs.

5. What are the most important actions the County should take to make progress on protection of trails and open space as recommended by the adopted 2016 Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan?

It's important to preserve our open spaces as outlined in the comprehensive plan. The recent example is the golf course. We refurbished it in place without expanding into the open unimproved spaces behind the course. We upgraded the facility, but much of the work was really deferred maintenance. It is a perfect example of preserving open space by maintaining adjacent recreational spaces without unnecessarily expanding them.

**EARLY
VOTING
STARTS OCT. 8**



**Ryn Herrmann
(Democratic Party)**

1. Why are small businesses not thriving in Los Alamos? What can the County do to help?

Small businesses are hindered by restrictive permitting rules, slow reviews & sometimes multiple requests for information. The County has helped by recently adding a Small Business Liaison position, which supports new & existing businesses. We actually have many successful small businesses despite challenges. The Los Alamos Business Accelerator, which I managed for 3 years, has launched over a dozen new businesses. But there is room for improvement!

2. What does County transparency mean to you and how can it be improved?

Government transparency means being open & honest with citizens about business & tax spending, but it also means making this information accessible & useful. The County has improved communication by updating its website & publishing more articles. They also hold outreach meetings & surveys for feedback. However, the County should be more active on digital platforms & social media. Engaging more online can enhance transparency & keep citizens connected & informed.

3. What actions should the County take to make housing more affordable for the workforce (e.g. teachers, retail workers, medical staff, restaurant staff, etc.)?

The Council recently approved a new Affordable Housing Plan to address our housing shortage. The plan includes goals & strategies to increase housing availability & affordability for all income levels, & highlights the development of "missing middle" housing. The County can and should also participate in public private partnerships. But the

approval of this plan marks the beginning of a concerted effort to ensure that housing is accessible to all.

4. Some residential and commercial properties in our County are vacant or underused. Since these are private properties, how can the County encourage better use of these properties?

To encourage better use of vacant private properties, the County could implement strategies like offering temporary tax reductions for property owners who activate or improve their spaces. Streamlining or simplifying permitting processes would also help. As the Chamber Dir., I ran the LA Business Accelerator that used many vacant properties as pop-up spaces for entrepreneurs to test drive their new business ideas. Many ended up leasing or buying the spaces. There are ways to fill vacant spaces!

5. What are the most important actions the County should take to make progress on protection of trails and open space as recommended by the adopted 2016 Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan?

The County should continue to create new connections, such as the new Canyon Rim Trail extension. We should also continue to invest in trail maintenance, encourage public involvement, & partner with conservation groups. Funding through grants & partnerships should be explored. Through actions like this, we can effectively protect our natural resources and continue to achieve goals for our trails and open spaces.



**Denise Derkacs
(Democratic Party)**

1. Why are small businesses not thriving in Los Alamos? What can the County do to help?

Encouraging residents to "shop local" is essential for a vibrant business commu-

nity in the County. Equally important is creating an environment in which small businesses can thrive. The County should continue to provide dedicated staff support to assist businesses with its permitting process. The County also should continue to support business incubators, workforce training, and other programs through its contracts for the Chamber of Commerce, the MainStreet program, and the Visitor Centers.

2. What does County transparency mean to you and how can it be improved?

Transparency promotes accountability by informing and engaging the public in County activities. The NM Open Meetings Act requires that public business be conducted in public view. The County publishes meeting agendas more than 72 hours in advance and a tickler of agenda topics 4 weeks in advance. The County should issue press releases, conduct surveys, hold townhalls, encourage use of its online eComment tool on meeting agendas, and add an online Performance Dashboard to track County actions.

3. What actions should the County take to make housing more affordable for the workforce (e.g. teachers, retail workers, medical staff, restaurant staff, etc.)?

The County updated its Affordable Housing Plan, as required by the NM Affordable Housing Act, to provide housing incentives for low-, median-, and moderate-income households up to 120% of area median income. The County supported two recent affordable housing projects on DP Road and should support additional affordable housing projects on its parcel A8A south of DP Road. The County also should continue to work with Los Alamos Public Schools on the North Mesa Housing Project for workforce housing.

4. Some residential and commercial properties in our County are vacant or underused. Since these are private properties, how can the County encourage better use of these properties?

One tool the County can use to stimulate property redevelopment is the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. The MRA

designation can enable public investment in private redevelopment projects that support downtown revitalization and provide public benefits. An associated Tax Increment Financing District can capture incremental rise in property taxes within the district for MRA projects. The County also could reconsider a Vacancy Ordinance, modeled on Raton, although enforcement could be challenging.

5. What are the most important actions the County should take to make progress on protection of trails and open space as recommended by the adopted 2016 Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan?

County residents strongly value our trails and open spaces, as documented in the Comprehensive Plan. The County has some 60 miles of trails and some 4000 acres of designated open space. The Development Code and Official Zoning Map, both revised December 2022, established four open space designations: public parks, recreational open space, active open space, and passive open space. The County should finalize its Open Space and Trails Management Plan to protect and maintain these County treasures.



James Curtis Wernicke, Jr (Libertarian Party)

1. Why are small businesses not thriving in Los Alamos? What can the

County do to help?

High rent and labor costs are common challenges. Navigating local regulations and permitting is also a problem. Effective advertising is difficult. A smaller population makes it harder to compete with shopping online or in nearby larger cities. The County could streamline business permitting, inspection, and licensing processes and waive fees. It could avoid competing with local small businesses and size County projects to allow them to compete.

2. What does County transparency mean to you and how can it be improved?

Transparency means clear, timely, and accurate information on decisions, resource allocation, and policy implementation that is easily accessed in multiple formats and languages. It builds trust and informed community participation. The County should improve digital platforms and searchable data, provide more regular and advanced notice, expand engagement, and adopt participatory budgeting. Independent oversight would also improve accountability and trust.

3. What actions should the County take to make housing more affordable for the workforce (e.g. teachers, retail workers, medical staff, restaurant staff, etc.)?

To make housing affordable, Los Alamos should expand residential zoning to increase density in downtown areas and allow more cost-effective construction designs, materials, and labor in the building code. It should streamline permitting, waive development fees and taxes, and tax land at fair market value. This would foster a housing market where local builders could compete with larger developers by emphasizing flexibility, customer focus, local expertise, and community involvement.

4. Some residential and commercial properties in our County are vacant or underused. Since these are private properties, how can the County encourage better use of these properties?

To discourage blight, Los Alamos should assess land at its most productive value and eliminate taxes on development. Reform zoning for flexible use, streamline bureaucracy and waive fees, and allow innovative, cost-effective construction methods in the building code. Promote diverse real estate ownership and enforce fair market practices to foster a healthy real estate environment. These measures ensure properties are utilized efficiently.

5. What are the most important actions the County should take to make progress on protection of trails and open space as recommended by

the adopted 2016 Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan?

The County should have clear goals and timelines for implementing conservation and sustainable use of its trails and open space. Prioritize vulnerable areas as conservation zones, minimize the impact of development and infrastructure, maintain and expand trails responsibly, and actively engage and collaborate with local and neighboring stakeholders such as through volunteering. Secure diverse funding and implement climate resilience strategies to protect these resources for future generations.

Judicial Retention Election

In a non-partisan retention election, voters may vote either “yes” or “no” for each judge standing for retention. To retain office, a judge must receive 57% “yes” votes out of all the votes cast on the question of retention. The website of the Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee, www.nmjpec.org, includes evaluations and information about judicial retention candidates.

Justice of the Supreme Court – Retention



Briana H Zamora (Nonpartisan Retention Election)

1. What qualifies you for this position?

As a judge, I have served at all levels of the judiciary from the Metropolitan Court to the Supreme Court. I have presided in thousands of cases and well over a hundred jury trials. New Mexicans deserve experienced judges who are independent and have integrity. I have a wealth of judicial experience and a reputation of integrity and fairness. I hope to continue my service to New Mexico as a Supreme Court Justice.

2. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NM Supreme Court practices and why?

The Supreme Court oversees every court and judicial program in New Mexico. Overall, the judiciary in New Mexico is first rate. However, there are two areas I hope to improve. First, improving the efficacy and efficiency in how the judiciary implements its behavioral health programs would benefit the entire state. Second, working to ensure there is access to legal representation for all New Mexicans, particularly individuals in our rural communities.

3. What improvements, if any, are needed in the Supreme Court?

The Supreme Court and its employees work tirelessly to issue opinions that are accurate, fair and timely. Lack of resources is our greatest challenge. The Court needs additional attorneys and paralegals to assist the Court in more efficiently issuing the Court’s opinions, orders and Supreme Court Rules.

Judge of the Court of Appeals – Retention



Jennifer L Attrep (Nonpartisan Retention Election)

1. What qualifies you for this position?

I have nearly two decades of experience on the bench and in private practice. I have served as a Court of Appeals Judge since 2018 and currently serve as the Chief Judge. As an appellate judge, I have resolved hundreds of appeals in all areas of the law and assisted with Court administration. I previously was a trial judge in Northern New Mexico where I managed a varied docket, presided over thousands of cases, and held over 50 trials. Prior to joining the bench, I served as an appellate attorney and litigator in a variety of civil and criminal cases and clerked for a federal trial judge.

2. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NM Court of Appeals practices and why?

The Court of Appeals is responsible for

resolving the vast majority of appeals in New Mexico and, as a result, has a busy and heavy docket. The Court has made significant progress in resolving cases more quickly. Through the tireless efforts of staff and judges, the Court has cleared its backlog that had previously been amassed due to judicial turnover. The Court is dedicated to building on this progress and has adopted programs to increase efficiencies. The Court piloted a program that streamlines the appeal process, and recently implemented a program that provides free mediation services to more expeditiously resolve appeals. We are working to expand these programs and continue to explore other ways to better serve New Mexicans.

3. What improvements, if any, are needed in the Court of Appeals?

The Court of Appeals is focused on expanding public access and improving Court administration. During the pandemic, the Court began allowing unrepresented parties to electronically file court documents; and we are working to expand electronic access for unrepresented parties. The Court will be publishing self-help materials that explain the appellate process and assist unrepresented parties and attorneys in meeting their obligations on appeal. We will be rolling out live-streaming to increase access to our proceedings. The Court of Appeals also is working to obtain needed funding to build its administrative team, so the Court is more efficiently and effectively run. The current lack of staffing greatly overburdens our staff and judges.



Shammara H Henderson

(Nonpartisan Retention Election)

1. What qualifies you for this position?

I have been a judge on the NM Court of

Appeals since my appointment by the Governor in 2020. In that time, I have

gained valuable experience as an appellate judge. Prior to becoming a judge, I had a diverse career practicing in both criminal and civil law. I practiced in both state and federal court at the trial and appellate level. I have dedicated my career to ensuring diversity and equity in the judicial system.

2. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NM Court of Appeals practices and why?

We have worked hard the last several years to reduce the time it takes for us to rule on cases before our court. We currently have two pilot projects that have dramatically decreased the time to file opinions in our cases. One impacts our criminal cases, and we have seen our turnaround time dramatically improve. The other is our mediation program, which while new, has already helped with our civil cases. I am dedicated to continuing our efforts to reduce our caseload and find ways to ensure we are ruling on cases in a timely manner.

3. What improvements, if any, are needed in the Court of Appeals?

The main issue that our court has faced is a lack of resources. It has been a priority of mine to ensure that we have more resources. We have used these resources to rebuild our administrative staff and building maintenance. Our priority as judges should be to focus on our cases and to do so, we need the proper resources to ensure our court functions at the level expected by the parties who appear before us. We still have some improvements to make, but we have done a lot to rebuild the past several years.



Megan P Duffy

(Nonpartisan Retention Election)

1. What qualifies you for this position?

I have served as a judge on

the Court of Appeals for nearly six years now and gained tremendous experience from working on hundreds of cases

involving a broad range of legal issues. I take care with every case to show the parties that we have fully and fairly considered the issues, and to impartially explain what the law says about the issue so the parties understand our decision. Before joining the Court, I had 10 years of experience as an attorney. I began my legal career as a law clerk of Justice Richard Bosson at the New Mexico Supreme Court.

2. What changes, if any, would you recommend to the NM Court of Appeals practices and why?

The Court of Appeals experienced tremendous judicial turnover from 2015-2022, which resulted in a backlog of hundreds of cases. My colleagues and I have worked hard for several years to clear that backlog and I'm happy to report that we have done so. Stability on the Court (no turnover in the last 2 years), was important to accomplishing this goal. In addition, we received some additional resources from the Legislature in the last few years, which allowed the Court to restart a mediation program, fill vacant positions, and work with retired appellate judges on a pro tem basis. That was a wonderful experience, and having a robust pro tem program could benefit courts, especially during periods of turnover.

3. What improvements, if any, are needed in the Court of Appeals?

While we are proud of our work in clearing the backlog, the Court still wants to move cases faster through the court. We have set a goal of resolving 95% of all cases within 720 days, or just under two years. We have made tremendous progress in our time-to-disposition, but still have work to do. We have been working to obtain the resources we need (both funding and personnel), and piloting programs that we hope will allow us to resolve cases quicker, including (1) a revamped mediation program, (2) a pilot project for criminal cases that produces briefing earlier in the case, and (3) a speech-to-text program that allows us to review trials and hearings more efficiently.

District Court Judge, First Judicial District – Retention



Shannon Broderick Bulman – Division 3 Family Court & Children's Court (Nonpartisan Retention Election)

1. What are your qualifications for this position?

I have been a licensed attorney in New Mexico for approximately 35 years, and I have served as a District Court Judge for approximately 4 ½ years. I am committed to continuing to diligently serve the residents of the First Judicial District in a thoughtful and fair manner.

2. What alternatives to incarceration do you support for nonviolent crimes?

My current docket primarily includes family court matters and does not include criminal cases. I see many parties, however, who have child custody, domestic violence, divorce or kinship guardianship cases, in addition to pending criminal charges. These individuals often struggle with substance use disorder and mental health challenges. Readily available treatment services for substance use disorder and mental health conditions would allow some individuals to stay out of the criminal justice system and better care for and support their children and families.

3. What can be done to reduce the backlogs of court cases?

There is presently no backlog of court cases in my docket.



Bryan Paul Biedscheid – Division 6 Civil Court (Nonpartisan Retention Election)

1. What are your qualifications for

this position?

It has been my honor to serve as First Judicial District Judge for over five years and to serve as Chief Judge of the District for the past two and a half years. On the bench, I thoroughly prepare for every hearing and I listen carefully to the arguments of lawyers and self-represented parties alike. I try to thoughtfully communicate my rulings so that the parties, public, and reviewing courts are able to understand and consider their basis. I am a productive judge, in terms of adjudicating a full docket of cases while also serving as chief. In my administrative chief role, I work hard to secure and efficiently distribute resources to our magistrate and district courts. JPEC reviewed me as highly rated and recommends my retention.

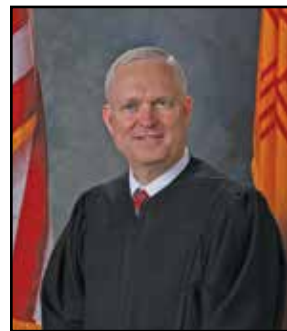
2. What alternatives to incarceration do you support for nonviolent crimes?

The Magistrate and District courts are impressively committed to public safety and creating positive judicial outcomes. In some instances, incarceration imposes justice and maintains safety in this district, where I, my family, and all of my colleagues live. However, in many cases, incarceration does not address the root cause of criminal behavior and, by limiting treatment in the present and eliminating options in the future, actually adds to community burden. Wise use of incarceration alternatives begins with Pretrial Services before trial, identifying those who must remain in jail and the

conditions on which others are released. When drug and/or mental health treatment addresses the cause, supervised diversion programs are effective.

3. What can be done to reduce the backlogs of court cases?

The Magistrate and District judges in this district and our judicial staff work very hard to keep the continuous stream of cases moving through their courts. I am inspired by the commitment and tireless work of my colleagues who are also up for retention, Shannon Bulman and Matthew Wilson. I focus on reducing the time to disposition of my cases because that is what I can control. Resources are key to this goal: we are working to get new Magistrate Court facilities and office space in Santa Fe County and a new court facility in Rio Arriba County. Sufficient facilities will allow us to hold more trials. We are working, with respect for law enforcement and other stakeholders, to increase efficiency in criminal docket management.



Matthew Justin Wilson – Division 9 Civil Court (Nonpartisan Retention Election)
1. What are your qualifi-

cations for this position?

Having been a district court judge for 11 years, I have presided over all different types of cases including family law matters, criminal proceedings, and civil litigation. I practiced as a lawyer for 16 years before being appointed to the bench, work that included numerous jury trials. I recognize the importance of listening to the parties and giving each case the time and attention it deserves, knowing the great stress that the parties may be experiencing. With hard work and dedication, I have received solid judicial performance evaluations through the years. As a judge, I have always sought to be fair and impartial, while following the law in each case and trying to establish justice one case at a time.

2. What alternatives to incarceration do you support for nonviolent crimes?

One of the most difficult and demanding aspects of being a judge is deciding the appropriate sentence to impose on a person convicted of criminal conduct. For individuals convicted of a nonviolent crime, it is important to try to identify the underlying cause of the conduct so that the ultimate sentence will treat the fundamental reason for the behavior, in an effort to reduce recidivism rates and without compromising public safety. This can often be addressed by imposing a probationary sentence without incarceration that includes inpatient or outpatient substance abuse treatment. If

appropriate, a judge can consider drug court or treatment court for individuals with substance abuse, mental health, or housing issues.

3. What can be done to reduce the backlogs of court cases?

Besides increasing human resources to tackle rising caseloads, proper case management can reduce case backlogs. A judge should maintain time standards and deadlines by setting cases for trial and motions for hearing within reasonable timeframes. In addition, a judge should make decisions promptly, ideally from the bench at the conclusion of a hearing, to avoid the accumulation of unfinished work while also allowing the parties to move forward with their case. It is important for a judge to monitor the progress of cases on an ongoing basis by running frequent status reports to identify cases that need attention, as a means to reduce the time it takes to move a case from its initial opening to its final disposition or resolution.



Constitutional Amendments

Constitutional Amendments

The following summary and arguments are condensed from material provided by the NM Legislative Council Service (LCS) staff. Neither the LCS nor the League has an opinion on the amendments and makes no claim for the validity or consistency of the arguments presented.

Constitutional Amendment 1:

“PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 8, SECTION 15 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO TO EXTEND A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION, CURRENTLY ONLY ALLOWED FOR ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DISABLED VETERANS AND THEIR WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS, TO VETERANS WITH LESS THAN A ONE HUNDRED PERCENT DISABILITY AND THEIR WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS AND

BASING THE AMOUNT OF THE EXEMPTION ON A VETERAN’S DISABILITY RATING.”

SUMMARY of Proposed Constitutional Amendment 1 (CA 1)

Constitutional Amendment 1, passed by the legislature in 2023, would amend Article 8, Section 15 of the Constitution of New Mexico to extend a property tax exemption currently only allowed for 100% disabled veterans and their wid-

owed spouses to veterans with less than a 100% disability and their widowed spouses. The amount of the exemption would be equal to the percentage of the veteran’s federal disability rating. Unlike other tax exemptions, the loss of revenue due to property tax exemptions is mitigated by an automatic increase in property taxes for those not eligible for the exemption. Due to a mechanism in the Property Tax Code known as yield control, at least 40% of

the estimated loss of revenue from the proposed exemption would be absorbed by an automatic property tax increase of approximately \$34.00 per year for all other taxpayers. The remainder of the loss that occurs would be borne primarily by local governments, not the state. Those local governments may choose to impose additional authority to increase property tax rates to offset the losses not mitigated by yield control. Sixty-three percent of the state's veteran population is concentrated in Bernalillo, Dona Ana, Sandoval, Santa Fe and Otero counties, and the increase in the proposed exemption may have an increased impact on the property tax revenues for those counties as opposed to those with lower veteran populations.

Arguments For CA 1

1. Exemption would provide disabled veterans protection from rising property taxes.

Allowing the property tax exemption for veterans with a permanent service-connected disability will support property-owning disabled veterans and their widowed spouses in an amount proportional to the percentage of the veteran's disability rating. This may be especially beneficial to many who are now or will soon be living on fixed incomes, since their property taxes may keep increasing even though their incomes do not.

2. Exemption allows service-connected disabled veterans to be treated equally.

Expanding the property tax exemption sends the message that anyone who suffers a disability while serving in the armed forces deserves to be taken care of equally, regardless of the severity of the injury.

3. Expresses support of the state for veterans.

Expanding this property tax exemption demonstrates New Mexico's support for and appreciation of members of the armed forces who risked their lives and served their country, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice of their bodies and health.

4. Exemption may result in more veterans moving to New Mexico.

A decrease in property tax could provide an incentive for veterans of the armed forces to move to and buy property in New Mexico, which may increase the state's population and tax base.

5. Benefits of exemption for veterans outweigh extra costs for other taxpayers.

The estimated cost of an additional annual per capita burden of \$34.00 for the general population of the state is comparatively low to the benefit provided to the nearly 30,000 service-related disabled veterans with property tax liability in the state.

Arguments Against CA 1

1. Exemption may benefit those who do not need financial assistance.

The exemption may be too broad in application since it would apply to any veteran who has been determined to have a permanent service-connected disability, regardless of financial status. If the purpose is to relieve the financial burden on those who are unable, due to their disability, to pay property taxes, then the exemption should target those with limited incomes.

2. Financial assistance is already available for disabled veterans through a number of programs.

There are other social programs that disabled veterans may access to assist with living expenses. For instance, there are numerous state, federal and non-profit programs that serve veterans. The policy for this resolution may rely on a perceived need that does not reflect the availability of these resources.

3. Non-disabled-veteran property taxpayers will pay more due to exemption.

By expanding eligibility for a property tax exemption, the property tax bills of other state residents will increase. Other property taxpayers must compensate for the revenue that is lost, which is used to pay for the needs of all state residents.

4. Exemption violates property tax principles.

A property tax is traditionally based on the value and nature of the property, not the personal characteristics of the owner. Creating an exemption for certain indi-

viduals is a departure from the underlying principle of property taxation and could set a precedent for other groups to seek a similar exemption.

5. The federal government should help disabled veterans, not the state.

Congress should be responsible for addressing the needs of those who became disabled as a result of their national military service. Since the state is tasked with providing this exemption to disabled veterans, the state also receives a financial burden that is better suited for the finances of the nation. If voters believe that more compensation is due to disabled veterans and their spouses, then they should ask their representatives in Congress to address the issue.

6. Property tax benefit for veterans already exists in the Constitution of New Mexico.

Article 8, Section 5 of the Constitution of New Mexico already provides a tax benefit for honorably discharged members of the military. An additional benefit for veterans may not be necessary.

7. Exemption excludes other property taxpayers who are disabled due to work-related injuries.

The nation has maintained an all-volunteer military for many years, so military service is a chosen employment. There are many dangerous but necessary occupations with a high chance of disability from injury, so it is unclear why disabled veterans warrant preferable treatment in comparison to other disabled persons. There is no justification for the state to give a property tax exemption to only one class of disabled workers based solely on their choice of employment.

Constitutional Amendment 2:

“PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 8, SECTION 5 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO TO INCREASE A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR HONORABLY DISCHARGED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THEIR WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS.”

SUMMARY of Proposed Constitutional Amendment 2

In 2023, the New Mexico Legislature passed Constitutional Amendment 2

that, if approved by the voters, would amend Article 8, Section 5 of the Constitution of New Mexico to increase a property tax exemption for honorably discharged veterans and their widowed spouses from \$4,000 to \$10,000, an amount that will be adjusted annually for inflation. As discussed in the summary for Constitutional Amendment 1, the loss of revenue due to property tax exemptions is mitigated by an automatic increase in property taxes for those not eligible for the exemption. While the budgets of local governments will bear most of the loss of revenue, at least 40% will be absorbed by an automatic property tax increase of approximately \$34.00 per year for all other property taxpayers.

Arguments For CA 2

1. Helps honorably discharged veterans and their widowed spouses to maintain homeownership.

Reducing the property tax paid by honorably discharged members of the armed forces and their widowed spouses supports property-owning veterans and their widows or widowers and helps them maintain homeownership, which may be especially beneficial to many who are now or will soon be living on fixed incomes, since their property taxes may keep rising even though their incomes do not.

2. Exemplifies appreciation of the state for those who sacrificed for the nation.

Increasing property tax exemptions for honorably discharged veterans demonstrates New Mexico's support for and appreciation of members of the armed forces who risked their lives and served their country honorably.

3. Could boost New Mexico's population and tax base.

A decrease in property tax could provide an incentive for veterans of the armed forces to move to and buy property in New Mexico, which may increase the state's population and tax base.

4. Provision for inflation adjustment negates need for future constitutional amendments.

By adjusting the amount of the exemp-

tion for inflation, the amount of the exemption for veterans will increase without requiring a future constitutional amendment, which is a challenging, lengthy and costly process.

5. Increased exemption amount accounts for increased property values and value of the dollar.

The increased exemption amount is fairer to veterans and their spouses in 2024. The current exemption was set in 2002 and, since then, the value of the dollar has increased approximately 72% while property values have increased by approximately 80%.

Arguments Against CA 2

1. Congress should be responsible for providing veterans' benefits.

It is inappropriate for state and local governments to bear the expense of providing extended benefits to veterans in return for their service in a branch of the United States armed forces. If more generous benefits are due to veterans and their spouses, Congress should provide those benefits. The compensation and benefits given to veterans in return for their service are a national responsibility, not a state or local responsibility.

2. Exemption could benefit those who chose to enlist.

The mandatory United States military draft ended in 1973, and the military has been an all-volunteer force for a little more than 50 years. Special property tax benefits should not be extended to someone who makes the choice to work in a branch of the United States armed forces.

3. Unfair to other property taxpayers who will pay more due to exemption increase.

An increase in this property tax exemption will shift the tax burden, and the tax bills of all other New Mexico property owners will increase.

4. Property tax exemption increase not based on financial need.

Tax relief measures should be based on need. There is no evidence that veterans have lower incomes or a greater need for property tax relief than other taxpayers. If additional property tax relief is to be granted, low-income taxpayers

who spend a disproportionate share of their income on property taxes may benefit more from this type of relief. It is possible that, with the passage of the proposed constitutional amendment, veterans who are financially stable and who own large, high-value homes will be relieved from contributing their property tax share.

5. Exemption for special groups of property taxpayers could set precedent for other individuals to seek tax relief.

Property tax is based on the value and nature of the property, not the personal characteristics of the owner. Creating an exemption for certain individuals is a departure from the underlying principle of property taxation and could set a precedent for other groups to seek similar exemptions.

6. Exemption exclusionary to some honorably discharged veterans.

The exemption amount benefits a portion of veterans as it only applies to owner-occupied residences that are used as a principal place of residency and will exclude veterans who are institutionalized, homeless or renters.

7. Inflation provision would increase property taxes even more for non-veteran property taxpayers.

The proposal to index the amount of exemption for inflation may continue to erode the property tax base and annually increase the property tax bills for those who are not eligible for the property tax exemption.

Constitutional Amendment 3:

“PROPOSING TO AMEND ARTICLE 6, SECTION 35 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO BY ALLOWING THE DEAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF LAW TO APPOINT A DESIGNEE TO THE JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION.”

SUMMARY of Proposed Constitutional Amendment 3

Constitutional Amendment 3 proposes to amend Article 6, Section 35 of the Constitution of New Mexico to allow the dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law to appoint a designee

to serve as chair of the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission. The dean's designee must be an associate dean, a faculty member, a retired faculty member or a former dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law.

Arguments For CA 3

1. The dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law is not uniquely qualified to serve as chair of the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission.

The role of chair of the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission is primarily administrative. The Rules Governing Judicial Nominating Commissions outline the role of the chair and task the chair with the duties of announcing the existence of a judicial vacancy to the public and members of the commission, scheduling meetings of the commission and providing the media with notice of the meetings, preparing application packets and preparing agendas for meetings. These are not tasks that require the legal mind of the dean of a school of law, but even if they were, this proposed amendment ensures that there will be an esteemed legal scholar serving as chair of the commission. The dean may only designate an associate dean, a faculty member, a retired faculty member or a former dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law to serve as chair. Each of those categories of potential designees will include many people who are qualified to serve as chair of the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission.

2. Allows the dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law to focus on the role as the dean of New Mexico's only law school.

The University of New Mexico School of Law serves a vital interest to the state by educating a vast majority of the attorneys who practice here since it is the only school of law in New Mexico. This places a significant amount of responsibility on the dean of the school of law. Beyond the normal duties of being the dean of a school of law, and the current requirement to serve as chair of the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission, the dean is also required by statute to

serve as the chair of the Judicial Compensation Commission. Allowing the dean's designee to serve on the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission would support the dean in focusing on the dean's law school duties, ensuring the successful legal education of New Mexico's aspiring attorneys.

3. The dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law is already entrusted to designate members of several important commissions.

The dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law is already permitted to have a designee for important commissions, including the New Mexico Sentencing Commission and the New Mexico Compilation Commission. The dean is also required to appoint three members to the Public Defender Commission. Each of these commissions have functioned adequately without requiring the dean to attend every meeting. Since the dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law has been entrusted to make good decisions on the membership of important commissions for decades, there should be no harm in allowing the dean to designate someone as the chair of the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission.

Arguments Against CA 3

1. Potentially removes a neutral tie-breaking vote from the commission.

When the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission was created, there was a desire to have a neutral person who could break any of the commission's tie votes. The legislature, which passed the joint resolution to create the commission, and the people, who voted to pass the constitutional amendment in 1988, believed that the dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law was the best person to put into this neutral tie-breaking role.

2. Could remove one of New Mexico's most prominent legal scholars from the judicial appointment process.

The Appellate Judges Nominating Commission serves a vital role in New Mexico's judicial system by vetting and nominating candidates for the most

prominent judicial positions in the state. The dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law has a unique level of legal experience that makes the dean an important resource during the commission's vetting process. Furthermore, the dean is tapped into New Mexico's legal community by virtue of being the head of the state's only law school. The dean's connections in the legal community could provide insight into the careers and backgrounds of the applicants that the commission vets. If the dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law does not serve as the chair of the Appellate Judges Nominating Commission, the commission will lose a very valuable resource.

Constitutional Amendment 4:

“PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 10, SECTION 1 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO TO PROVIDE THAT THE SALARIES OF COUNTY OFFICERS SHALL BE ESTABLISHED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, REMOVE REFERENCES TO THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND CLARIFY THAT ANY FEES COLLECTED BY A COUNTY OFFICIAL SHALL BE PAID INTO THE TREASURY OF THE COUNTY.”

SUMMARY of Proposed Constitutional Amendment 4

Counties are local political subdivisions created by the state. Article 10, Section 1 of the Constitution of New Mexico currently reads:

The legislature shall at its first session classify the counties and fix salaries for all county officers, which shall also apply to those elected at the first election under this constitution. And no county officer shall receive to his own use any fees or emoluments other than the annual salary *provided by law*, and all fees earned by any officer shall be by him collected and paid into the treasury of the county. (emphasis added)

Within Article 10, Section 1, the term “county officers” refers to elected county officials and includes county

commissioners, treasurers, assessors, sheriffs, clerks and probate judges. This section has been interpreted to mean that the salaries of county officers must be established by the legislature in state law. Accordingly, when the legislature decides to increase or otherwise adjust salaries for county officials, it updates existing statutes that set out separate salary caps for each county classification. The current statutes are compiled as Sections 4-44-4, 4-44-4.1, 4-44-5 and 4-44-14 NMSA 1978.

Constitutional Amendment 4 proposes to amend Article 10, Section 1 of the Constitution of New Mexico to replace “provided by law” with “established by the board of county commissioners”, therefore eliminating the legislature's role in setting the salaries for county officers and authorizing the individual boards of county commissioners to set the salaries for their own officers. In addition, it makes several proposed technical amendments to remove a reference to the first legislative session, clarify that fees collected by a county official shall be paid into the treasury of the county and use gender-neutral language.

Arguments For CA 4

1. Provides more local control to boards of county commissioners.

While it made sense for the legislature to set county officer salaries when the state was new, the counties are now long-standing, established entities that handle their own affairs without such close state guidance. Like the elimination of the fee system at the time the constitution was ratified, this amendment is similarly a measure to modernize the system to better reflect the realities of day-to-day governance. The current law only sets maximum salaries for county officers and already allows boards of county commissioners discretion in determining salary increases for their officers within the statutory limitations. Proposed Constitutional Amendment 4 would promote government efficiency by allowing these local decisions to be made locally.

2. Could recruit more quality candidates for county officer positions.

County officers manage complex

bureaucracies and require executive experience and specialized skills to be effective on behalf of their constituents. To ensure that voters have the opportunity to elect qualified officers, counties need the flexibility to set salaries to attract experienced and skilled candidates. Additionally, different counties face different job market pressures and have different needs. Because county officer salaries in all but one county currently rely on county classifications based on a combination of population size and the total value of real estate within a county, a small-population county with a low total real estate valuation may need to provide higher salaries than its classification currently allows in order to attract a candidate pool similar to those available in higher-population, higher-valuation urban counties. This amendment would allow counties to be more responsive to their own needs and provide for more professional management.

3. Constitutional and statutory safeguards exist to check the power of county commissioners in setting salaries.

The constitution and laws of the state have measures that serve as a check on the powers of county commissioners in setting the salaries of county officers. For example, Article 4, Section 27 of the Constitution of New Mexico prohibits public officials from receiving extra compensation and from increasing or diminishing the salaries of incumbents during their terms in office; Article 9, Section 10 of the constitution restricts county indebtedness; and various sections of Chapter 6 NMSA 1978 govern public finances and the expenditure of public funds.

4. Will give voters more say in how their counties are managed.

County officers are locally elected and directly accountable to their constituents. Setting salaries for county officers at the local level will give the local voters a stronger voice in how their counties are managed. This amendment would localize salary decisions and make county officers more accountable to their constituents.

Arguments Against CA 4

1. Without legislative oversight, county official salaries will be wide-ranging and inconsistent among counties.

Pursuant to its current obligation to fix the salaries for county officers, the legislature has established a comprehensive classification system based on a combination of a county's population and the total value of real estate within the county. This system helps to ensure that salaries are uniform and proportional across the state. This proposed amendment empowers boards of county commissioners to establish officer salaries without any standards such as attaching salaries to county classifications or guardrails such as salary minimums or maximums. Without standards or guardrails, county constituents will face unpredictability and potential issues regarding fairness and transparency. This amendment would disrupt an established and uniform system and could give rise to unforeseen problems.

2. Removing legislature's authority could lead to negative consequences for counties.

Allowing boards of county commissioners full discretion to determine salaries for their officers takes authority and power away from the legislature. Counties are political subdivisions of the state created by the legislature, and, although counties have separate revenue sources, county money is still public money. The people of the state have an interest in the legislature retaining the power to set county officer salaries because it serves as a mutual check — it is a reasonable limit on counties' powers and requires accountability from the legislature. For example, the current system ensures that the legislature reviews important county metrics and the work demands of various county officers every few years. This builds a greater knowledge base about counties within the legislature, helping it make better decisions about funding infrastructure and services in counties each year. This amendment may disconnect the legislature from the counties, which could have a negative impact on public policy.

3. County commissioners would set their own salaries.

Currently, Article 10, Section 1 of the Constitution of New Mexico places the

legislature in a neutral third-party role and provides assurances to the people of the state that county officer salaries are determined impartially. This proposed

amendment may make these determinations more susceptible to short-term political or personal considerations. If this measure passes, county commissioners

will not only be determining the salaries for officials they directly oversee, they will be setting salaries for themselves. By removing the legislature from this

determination process, this amendment may give rise to issues concerning public trust and accountability.



Bond Question 1 – Aging and Long-Term Services Department

The 2024 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of senior citizen facility improvement, construction and equipment acquisition bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed thirty million seven hundred fifty-eight thousand one hundred dollars (\$30,758,100) to make capital expenditures for certain senior citizen facility improvement, construction and equipment acquisition projects and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?
For _____ Against _____

Bond Question 2 – Library Acquisitions

The 2024 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of library acquisition bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed nineteen million three hundred five thousand dollars (\$19,305,000) to make capital expenditures for academic, public school, tribal and public library resource acquisitions and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?
For _____ Against _____

Bond Question 3 – Higher Education

The 2024 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of higher education, special schools and tribal schools’ capital improvement and acquisition

bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed two hundred thirty million two hundred fifty-eight thousand four hundred dollars (\$230,258,400) to make capital expenditures for certain higher education, special schools and tribal schools capital improvements and acquisitions and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?
For _____ Against _____

Bond Question 4 – Public Safety

The 2024 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of public safety radio communications systems improvement bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed ten million two hundred ninety-seven thousand one hundred dollars (\$10,297,100) to make capital expenditures for public safety radio communications systems stabilization and modernization and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?
For _____ Against _____

College District General Obligation Bond Question—UNM-LA

“Shall the Advisory Board of the University of New Mexico Los Alamos Branch Community College District, be authorized to issue up to \$3,000,000 of general obligation bonds for the purpose of erecting, furnishing, constructing, purchasing, remodeling and equipping

buildings and utility facilities, exclusive of stadiums; making other real property improvements; purchasing grounds; and purchasing and installing computer hardware and software; or any combination of these purposes?”
For _____ Against _____

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is UNM-LA requesting money from the community?

The UNM-LA branch cannot receive money from The University of New Mexico main campus in Albuquerque. UNM-LA’s financial resources come primarily from local and state funds. Particularly, it is a state requirement for UNM-LA to match 25% of state funding with local money for capital projects. The bonds would fulfill this obligation. This is Los Alamos’ community college. Without local community financial support, the college could not operate at its full potential. The success of the school means success for community members from high school students to adult and lifelong learners, and everyone in between.

What are the UNM-LA general obligation bonds?

The advisory board for The University of New Mexico Los Alamos Branch (UNM-LA) Community College District is asking Los Alamos County voters to decide on \$3 million of general obligation bonds for campus improvement projects.

The state will match the county’s \$3 million in support with another \$9 million, providing a total of \$12 million towards UNM-LA capital improvement projects.

What will the bonds be used for?

The bonds will support construction and/or remodeling of outdated buildings and utility facilities on the Los Alamos campus. Note, the state has the ultimate authority on what capital projects are

approved. Specific examples of projects are: •To bring the campus up to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards • Replace leaking roofs • Update 1940s elementary school buildings for higher education needs • Upgrade IT systems and equipment for improved student learning • Modernize safety and energy efficiencies in buildings.

I’ve heard that bonds can increase the amount of taxes that I pay. Will these bonds increase my taxes?

Yes. The bonds would be paid through residential and non-residential property taxes. The current residential tax rate for higher education is \$1.795 mills. The UNM-LA general obligation bonds would be an increase of .501 mills — a 27.9% increase for a total of \$2.296 mills. The same additional .501 mills would apply to non-residential property, creating a 25.1% increase for a total of \$2.501 mills.

Examples of an increase of .5 mills:

Potential Tax Impact		
Residential/Commercial Property Value	Taxable Value (1/3 of Full Value)	Approximate Monthly Cost of \$0.5 Mill Increase
\$400,000.00	\$133,333.33	\$5.56
\$500,000.00	\$166,666.67	\$6.94
\$600,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$8.33

I see a Bond 3 (also known as the GO Bond) on the ballot, too. How is this different?

Bond 3 is asking for statewide higher education funding. These bonds will not raise taxes because they will come online as other bonds are sunseting. The UNM-LA Bond would specifically improve the Los Alamos campus. County residents may also recall that there was a school bond on the ballot last year. Those bonds did not increase taxes.

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