

LWVCNM Observer's Report

Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

October 9, 2024

Mary Templeton, observer

Present: David Heil (Chair), Michael Meek (Vice Chair), Jay Block, Joshua Jones, Katherine Bruch

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Election Evaluation

Dr. Lonna Atkeson, a political scientist at Florida State University and past Director of UNM's Center for the Study of Voting, Elections and Democracy presented her "Evaluating Elections: Sandoval County, NM" project. She has been studying elections in New Mexico since 1998 and conducting election studies since 2006. These studies collect metric data related to voter experience, turnout, and confidence, polling locations, and equipment.

Sandoval County is of interest because it is a little more Republican and Independent than the state as a whole, making it competitive in presidential elections. It is also demographically diverse and composed of urban and rural areas. Due to growth, voter registration has doubled since 2000. Sandoval County has ranked in the middle of New Mexico counties in voter confidence. Dr. Atkeson will report back with the results of the study after the election. The full presentation can be viewed here:

<https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/317290> 24:20 to 47:20

As background:

LWVUS supports electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters. LWVNM also supports verifiable and auditable procedures to guarantee the integrity of all statutory methods of voting in New Mexico, as well as methods that increase voter participation.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Three of thirteen speakers advocated for voter ID, paper ballots, hand counting of ballots and expressed distrust of voting machines. Others addressing county topics expressed gratitude for commission support of a local substance abuse rehabilitation center, and requested

commission help regarding property assessment practices in Corrales and road resurfacing in Regina.

Commissioner Discussion

One commissioner expressed appreciation to the Clerk's office for their work amid a record turnout on the first day of early voting.

Sandoval County Commission Website

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