



League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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The League of Women Voters of New Mexico, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



The Co-Presidents' Corner

By Kathy Brook and Hannah Burling
LWVNM Co-Presidents
president@lwvnm.org

Many thanks to League members for all that you have done to support the League's mission during the most recent election season. As is our custom, numerous members have worked to register voters and encourage candidate participation in VOTE411 and our printed voter guides as well as our candidate forums. Other activities include Hannah Burling (LWVSFC) driving copies of voter guides to counties with significant numbers of Native American Voters, Felicia Orth (LWVLA) speaking to about 500 students about the Electoral College, LWVCNM participating in a middle and high school social studies professional development day, and Eileen VanWie (LWVSNM) spearheading distribution of election information in utility bills in southern Doña Ana County. These are just a few examples of the work that we can be proud of.

Thanks to Edwina Jaramillo, LWVNM Voter Services Director, for her work related to VOTE411 and to Mark Coomes, who has been under contract to assist with the technical aspects of that work. We continue to have challenges in implementing VOTE411 and will be meeting with county clerks and the Secretary of State to remedy those.

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Thanks also to local Leagues for helping to quantify our efforts for reporting to LWVUS. This is one of those administrative tasks that help us to tell our story but collecting data is probably not what motivates our membership to join the League.

In the aftermath of the election, there was a special meeting of LWVUS with state Leagues via Zoom, in addition to the regular monthly meetings, of which there have been two since the election. The special meeting provided opportunities for participants to offer feedback.

More on Page 2

Co-Presidents' Report, from page 1

Issues raised included interest in improving civic education, improving civic education; concerns about the immigrant community; and encouraging people to remain engaged. Since then, we know that LWVUS has been reevaluating the League's way forward, considering where to take the lead on issues and where to serve as an ally to others. Guidance offered to state Leagues includes continued support for protection of voting rights, support for civic education and engagement, and making the case for democracy through communications and education campaigns (with emphasis on consistent messaging).

If you have ideas, please share with your local League or the LWVNM board (board@lwvnm.org).

Kathy Brook

I had a great time delivering the Native American Voter Guides across the northern part of the state prior to the election. The fall weather was gorgeous, and the Guides were very well received. As I introduced myself and began to explain the League to a tribal liaison in the McKinley County Clerk's Office, he said, "Oh, everybody in New Mexico knows what you ladies do."

If you are concerned about potential attacks on democracy, particularly on women's rights, voting and civil rights, please step up to advocate, to serve on the state board or as one of our many volunteers who represent the League at events and in coalition meetings. The nominating committee is still looking to find directors, the LWVNM Education Fund needs a new treasurer, our League Day at the Legislature and our Legislative Reception need support. The League is an effective political organization that is particularly well suited to defend our institutions and our democratic processes. Let's use it!

Hannah Burling

Action Report

By Akkana Peck, Action Committee Chair

The Action team met via Zoom on December 9 for introductions and to discuss priorities for the upcoming session.

The team will choose three top priorities later in December to submit to the Board. But regardless of which three are chosen, we will have members advocating on a wide variety of topics expected to come up in the 2025 session:

- Voting, Elections and Good Government, including legislative salaries;
- Environment, including gas and oil royalty rates and water issues;
- Health care, including a Medicaid For All plan, workforce issues, and the health care proposals from Think New Mexico;
- Immigration, e.g., sharing of data with ICE;
- Education, a wide variety of topics, some of which overlap with Immigration; Affordable Housing.

We also have quite a few events coming up:

- Saturday, Jan 4: Advocacy Workshop, with speakers Senator Carrie Hamblen and Linda Siegle. See the LWVNM website (<https://www.lwvnm.org/Action/2025/advocacy-workshop.html>) for more information.
- Tuesday, Jan 9: Legislative Preview, where we'll discuss likely upcoming bills of interest to the League.

- Wednesday, Feb 5: Legislative Reception at 5:30.
- Thursday, Feb 6: League Day at the Legislature. We'll have speakers at the NM Land Office and tables at the Legislature.

The 2025 session begins on Tuesday, Jan 21.

It's not too late to get involved! Join the Action mailing list, <https://mailman.swcp.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/action> and come to the Advocacy Workshop for some great tips on how to speak for or against a bill at the legislature.

A Flawed Democracy

By Dick Mason, Voting and Elections Director

Major institutions which evaluate the status of democracy in the world have cited gerrymandering as a contributing factor to the erosion of democracy in the U.S. The *Economist Magazine* publishes an annual report on the status of democracies in the world. It rates the U.S. 17th in the world – calling it a flawed democracy. It cites Electoral College and gerrymandering as major structural flaws. New Mexico did its part in addressing the question of the Electoral College by passing a joint resolution in support of the National Popular Vote. New Mexico can do its part in addressing the second major flaw by creating an independent redistricting commission to constrain gerrymandering.

The United States is the only democratic country that allows legislators to draw their own districts. The other democracies recognize the inherent conflict of interest in allowing legislators to draw their own districts.

Despite all the publicity around partisan gerrymandering, most gerrymandering is about incumbency protection --- when legislators of both parties collude to protect one another's seats. That contributes to the polarization we are experiencing in the United States and in New Mexico. As a result, Republican and Democratic candidates have to worry more about their primary races and much less about the general election.

Incumbency protection leads to the very high number of uncontested legislative races in New Mexico. Potential candidates of an opposing party know that they cannot win a race when the two major parties have colluded to create safe districts for one or the other party. According to Ballotpedia, in the 2022 election 45.7% of New Mexico Legislative seats were uncontested. Compare this to the percentage of uncontested legislative seats in three states with independent redistricting commissions: California 2.0%; Colorado 7.3%; and Michigan 0.7%.

Immigration Report

By Meredith Machen, Director of Special Projects

The Leadership Team of the LWV Immigration Discussion Group has many concerns about the threats to immigrants and to due process, given the campaign promises of the incoming administration. We are focused on what the LWV at all levels can do in 2025 and beyond to advocate, using the principles of the League's long-standing position on immigration. The League adopted the position in 2008 after a comprehensive study.

Please see LWV Position on Immigration, **Impact on Issues 2024-2026**, pp. 167-69, available at <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>

Historical Perspective

There have been very few changes in immigration laws since President Reagan signed the Immigration Reform

and Control Act of 1986, which granted amnesty and a path to citizenship for 3 million immigrants who had arrived in the country before 1984. Despite calls for immigration reform from both sides of the aisle over the past 40 years, Congress has been gridlocked on this issue. On his first day in office, President Biden laid out the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021, which would have reversed many of President Trump's policies, including the border wall, the travel ban, unlawful detentions and deportations, and restored the protections for DACA, which President Obama established by executive order and the Supreme Court had upheld. Biden's bill was never heard. Like Obama, Biden resorted to executive orders and regulations, most of which were undone by hostile court decisions. Fast forward to winter 2024, when the divided Congress was poised to pass Biden's Bipartisan Border Control Act. Candidate Trump called upon Republicans to vote against the bill because he wanted immigration to be his defining campaign issue.

Immigration laws are in place that provide protections and processes too numerous and complex to summarize here. President-elect Trump and his appointees aim to ignore those laws and due process, promising to conduct "mass deportations starting on Day One." They want to deport immigrants who have legal status and protections as well as "illegals."

Expedited Removal

Expedited removal is a procedure that allows U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials to rapidly deport certain undocumented immigrants and those who have committed misrepresentation or fraud. Under expedited removal processes, these noncitizens can be deported in as little as a day without an immigration court hearing or other appearance before a judge.

Laws to expand expedited removal have been challenged in court. As of now, those who are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs), those with valid and unexpired visas, admitted refugees, or asylum seekers are not subject to expedited removal, nor are unaccompanied minors.

Mass Deportation

Legal scholars and immigration experts overwhelmingly agree that Trump's plan to invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 will not pass muster; the reference to "invasion" in the Act clearly applies to organized wartime efforts, when a foreign country literally invades American soil. FDR deployed the Act immediately after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He used the Act to justify setting up detention camps for non-citizen Japanese residents. The Act simply does not apply to our current situation, where individuals from many foreign countries emigrate for disparate reasons. Several major civil rights organizations and a coalition of state governors and attorney generals are preparing to sue the Trump administration if it ignores established immigration laws and violates legal protections and procedures.

President-elect Trump is threatening to deploy federal troops to deport all kinds of migrants, even those who have rights to seek asylum, are on legal pathways to citizenship, or have naturalized or birthright citizenship. Governors have significant authority over the use of their states' National Guard members. Our governor has stated emphatically that she will refuse to let them be used for federal immigration enforcement or border control. A coalition of 15 or more states is working to protect their residents from Trump's planned actions.

A number of states have passed laws prohibiting the use of state and local government funds for federal immigration law enforcement. New Mexico's legislative majority leaders have prioritized immigration policies for the 2025 session. NM, a majority minority state, has many immigrant-friendly policies, including not allowing ICE to conduct raids at schools, and the NM Supreme Court has ruled that warrantless searches are illegal. We are continuing to expose the deplorable conditions at the three for-profit detention centers in our state. Meanwhile,

new detention centers are being planned for NM and for neighboring border states.

LWVCNM hosted a meeting on detention centers and private prisons that was recorded. The link to a powerful clip in the documentary shown in the meeting is https://youtu.be/pa6woXyrkg0?si=HJ_KIX1Jyt3pfY11. The link to the whole recording is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGTqOZTPmUw>. We have supported the Dignity Not Detention bill for two sessions, and we are looking forward to seeing the 2025 version, which will have a different name.

The Immigration Group Leadership Team will be watching closely as executive and Congressional actions evolve.

LWVWA Study on Immigrant Integration

League members in Washington have just completed a study of immigrant policies in their state. They will be having consensus meetings this winter with the hope of bringing this study to their state convention in early June. We look forward to hearing more about this study and its potential for broader LWV concurrence in due time. Dr. Susan F. Martin, a member of LWV Immigration Discussion Group Leadership Team is chairing the study. A renowned expert on migration and retired Georgetown professor, she has written extensively on international migration. Her book, *A Nation of Immigrants*, provides important perspectives on periods of our history when immigration was severely restricted.

Immigration Discussion Google Group

The Immigration Group leaders are learning more about the legal aspects of these threats and hope the LWVUS will join if there is national litigation on this issue that could lead to a Supreme Court decision.

The link to our website is <https://groups.google.com/g/lwvus-immigration-discussion-group>. If you would like to be added to the distribution list to receive emails and participate in the discussion, please email Jane Andrews LWV San Diego at jmlandrews@gmail.com. Please identify your League and your interests. It's been very interesting hearing about what is happening around the country with respect to immigration.

The next monthly meeting of the LWV Immigration Discussion Group leaders will be on Tuesday, January 28, 9 am MT. We will develop plans for new Zoom talks and ideas for action for the year ahead. If you would like to participate/visit, please contact Jane Andrews at jmlandrews@gmail.com or Katherine Gavzy at kathgav4@gmail.com.

LWV Immigration Discussion Group Leadership Team

Jane Andrews (San Diego, CA)
Beryl Flom (San Diego CA)
Katherine Gavzy (Pasadena Area, CA)
Edwina Jaramillo (Southern New Mexico)
Nancy Kral (Houston, TX)
Meredith Machen (Santa Fe County, NM)
Deborah Macmillan (Greater Princeton, NJ)
Susan Martin (San Juan Islands, WA)
Marlene O'Brien (Wellesley, MA)
Kim Reed (Glen Ellyn, IL)
Diane Tasian (Dallas, TX)
Linda Wassenich (Dallas, TX)

Please contact Meredith Machen, LWVNM Immigration Chair, at Meredith.machen@gmail.com, 505 577-6337 for more information. Thank you.

2025 Legislative Priorities for New Mexico Water Resilience

By Jeanne Logsdon, CNM

LWVNM's position on water resources/supply, which includes regional water planning; land use and water; and the role of government, supports the 2025 legislative priorities proposed by the New Mexico Water Advocates. Urgent action is required to implement legislation that has already been passed but not adequately funded.

The Water Advocates have identified four areas for immediate attention:

1. Provide Reliable Data: Accelerate implementation of the **2019 Water Data Act and the 2012 Aquifer Mapping Program**. Reliable, science-based data are essential for effective planning and management. State agencies need more resources to achieve compliance with the 2019 Act and to compile and report complete, timely water use data.

2. Support Regional Water Planning: Fund the **2023 Water Security Planning Act** with \$30 million for regional grants. These grants will enable regions to develop climate-driven resilience strategies grounded in their unique hydrologic and community realities.

3. Modernize State Water Agencies: Equip the Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission with skilled staff, modernized procedures, and upgraded data systems. These investments are crucial for providing the public with the compiled data and models needed for informed decision-making.

4. Enforce Water Rights: Fully implement the **2003 Active Water Resource Management (AWRM)** program by funding basin-specific rules and enforcement. This is critical to ensuring compliance with interstate agreements and addressing illegal water use. It will also prevent a threatened Rio Grande Compact violation caused by chronic overuse in the Middle Rio Grande, which jeopardizes downstream water supplies.

LWVNM is a supporter of the Water Advocates' monthly workshops. The next monthly workshop, January 16 at 6:30 on Zoom, will report on progress to achieve these legislative priorities. See the Advocates' website, <https://mrgwateradvocates.org>, for more information.

First Call to Convention

The 2025 Convention of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico will be held April 26 and 27 in Santa Fe. The Convention will adopt a program, elect a board of directors, adopt a budget for the next two years, and revise the bylaws. The business meetings will be conducted in the mornings on April 26 and 27. If you are interested in serving on the LWVNM board, please contact the Nominating Committee at Nominations@lwvnm.org.

Each League is entitled to a number of delegates proportional to its membership (details can be found in the LWVNM bylaws available at <https://www.lwvnm.org/bylaws.html>). In addition, all LWVNM board members except the local League presidents are automatically delegates. Finally, there is a slot for one delegate to represent LWVNM's members-at-large. Additional attendees are always welcome.

Please let your League board know if you would like to attend. Mark the date on your calendar! Complete details will be published in the spring issue of *La Palabra*.

LEAGUE DAYS AT THE LEGISLATURE February 5 and 6

Members will receive a Constant Contact with more details including information on nearby hotels and lunch options

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

LWVNM Legislative Reception – 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

La Fonda Hotel. 100 East San Francisco Street, Santa Fe

Speaker: Secretary of State, Maggie Toulouse Oliver

Thursday, February 6, 2025

8 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Three informational tables in the West Hall of History – State Capitol
10 to noon	Program at New Mexico State Land Office 310 Old Santa Fe Trail Just down the street from the Roundhouse
10:00 -10:30	Orientation to League Day
10:30 – 11:15	Molly Swank, Executive Director, Common Cause, New Mexico Modernization of the Legislature and Legislative Salaries
11:15 – noon	Stephanie Garcia Richard – New Mexico State Land Commissioner Increasing Gas & Oil Royalty Rates and Diversification of Revenue from State Lands

Voter Services Report

By Edwina Jaramillo, Voter Services Director

The Voter Services Committee met every month prior to the 2024 general election and will meet to debrief on December 2.

GIS Files

The GIS files are still not accurate on the NM RGIS (Resource Geographic Information System) website. The NM RGIS is a repository for GIS files maintained at UNM. (UNM is the contractor who maintains the files for the SOS.)

The SOS had informed us at our Spring meeting that we would not encounter issues for state and national elections this year; however, that was not the case. Errors in the files appear to be limited to county commission and water and sanitation districts and there may be more. League members reviewed districts, located an online map of each county commission district (sometimes with the assistance of the county clerk's office but just as likely without assistance), and visually compared them to the files in the NM RGIS. We assumed the county's website was accurate, but that may be an erroneous assumption.

Since there are errors in the NM RGIS, another meeting with the SOS is warranted to impress upon them the need for accurate files. We may also need to work with legislators (and the SOS?) to modify/correct legislation (or increase funding?)

to ensure that the SOS has to maintain accurate GIS files in the repository.

Letters to Party Chairs

Letters were sent to leaders of all parties asking that they encourage their party's candidates to respond to VOTE411 questions. I received positive responses from Democrats and Republicans, and believe this practice should be continued. However, I don't know whether they actually followed through with our request.

Native American (NA) Voter Guides

Native American Guides were produced and distributed in eight counties: Cibola, Luna, McKinley, Otero, Rio Arriba, San Juan, Socorro, and Taos. Additionally, we delivered extra voter guides to four other counties (Santa Fe, Bernalillo, Valencia and Sandoval) that were delivered to tribes in those counties. Our contactor did excellent work producing these guides under a tight deadline, and the proofreading assistance by the local Leagues was extremely helpful.

Response Rates

I will have response rates for each of the local Leagues and for LWVNM after the debrief meeting, but will say in general the response rate for the local Leagues has been in the respectable low to mid-80s in the past while for LWVNM it has been in the low to mid-20s. Since candidate response rate has been quite low in the 21 counties for which LWVNM was responsible, we may need to evaluate whether the amount of work Vote411 requires is worth the return. I recommend that we develop a long-term strategic outreach plan for those counties to increase LWV and VOTE411 visibility.

Additionally, it would be wise to consider Vote411 user data (both from previous years and this year) to provide insight into how many users viewed the online Voter Guide, how long they spent on each page, etc.

Vote411 Survey

The LWVUS has developed a survey for input by Vote411 administrators on the system. From the survey they'll learn what worked well, what needs improvement, and what's on users' wish list so they can continue to improve the VOTE411. The survey is due by December 20.

Analytics

Analytics on Vote411 were received. They show that between Jan 1 and Nov 5, 58,521 people in NM looked at VOTE411, which included 51,123 new users. The latter number may reflect the increase in PR/communication via social media. There were also separate reports for Sept-October and another for the month of October. In October alone, for the entire state there were 17,398 users with 243,4571 events triggered by the voter (events are things such as clicking a button, clicking a link, entering an address, etc.) The analytics are also broken down by city.

Summary

In summary, the Voter Guides are well-received (particularly the printed version) by the communities they serve. The Voter Guides, as well as the LWV in general, receive kudos from County Clerks and the SOS.



VOTE411 Social Media Campaign is a Success

By Janet Blair, LWV NM Communications Chair

Going online to reach voters in need of election information appears to be a success for the New Mexico League of Women Voters. Our budget was about \$7,000. The Communications Committee decided on a strategy to aim 60% of our effort at voters under 40 years and 40% at voters over 40 years old. We interviewed two public relations firms. Both confirmed that our plan was a good one. The final decision was to award our contract to Elliott Marketing of Clovis.

We directed Kathy Elliott and her staff to come up with graphics that would appeal to these two disparate age groups and to place them in the social media outlets that would best appeal to those voters. For example, we know that Facebook is used more heavily by those over 40. We wanted the ads to look like they were from New Mexico with New Mexican faces, typography and backgrounds. Below are some of the presentations and the analytics that each ad produced.

Under 40



ads

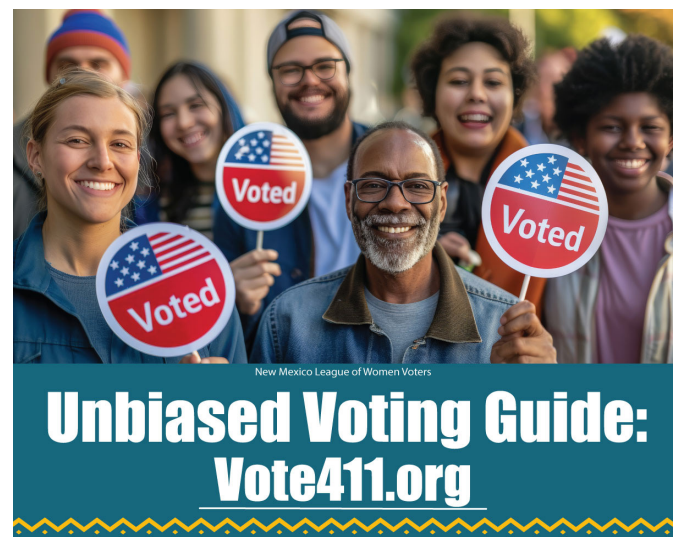


Ad #1: 23,600 impressions, 6835 people reached, 172 clicks

Ad #2: 67,289 impressions, 12,236 reached, 261 clicks



Ad #3: 37,808 impressions, 6708 people reached, 185 clicks



Ad #4: 59,754 impressions, 13,577 people reached, 301 clicks

Over 40 Ads

**Unbiased Voting Guide:
vote411.org**

New Mexico League of Women Voters

Ad #1: 27,569 impressions, 10,317 people reached, 102 engagements, 468 clicks

**Veterans' Benefit Questions
Are on Your Ballot!**
Get informed - vote411.org

Ad #2: 20,873, people reached 9069, 158 engagements, 445 clicks

**Concise,
Unbiased
Election
Guide**

For More Visit:
vote411.org

New Mexico League of Women Voters

Ad #3; 20,762 impressions, 5568 people reached, 34 engagements, 221 clicks

**Property Tax Questions
Are on Your Ballot!**
Learn more at vote411.org

New Mexico League of Women Voters

Ad #4: 25,655 impressions, 10,199 people reached, 143 engagements, 366 clicks

**Bond
Issues
Are On
Your
Ballot!**

Visit
vote411.org

New Mexico League of Women Voters

Ad #5 21,440 impressions, 8031 people reached, 91 engagements, 283 clicks

In summary, in the Under 40 ads, we totaled 187,854 impressions, with 919 clicks. The over 40 group racked up 97,609 impressions with 1783 clicks. So 285,463 impressions and about 2700 clicks for both groups.

We are just establishing ourselves as a source of unbiased digital information in an ocean of online chatter. We need to continue a strong online presence in the future in order to promote the League's goal of educating voters.

Making Democracy Work Award given to Raúl Burciaga

Photos by Kathleen Burke



The Making Democracy Work Award was presented to Raúl Burciaga Nov. 12, 2024 at a luncheon at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque. Burciaga retired this year after 14 years as executive director of the Legislative Council Services.



Top: Raúl Burciaga and son at the luncheon. Below, NM LWV Co-president (left) Hannah Burling and La Palabra Editor Barbara Calef, Right: NM LWV Co-president Kathy Brook and bottom: Nominating Committee members Karen Wentworth and Dick Mason.



Program Report

By Judy Williams, Program Chair

LWVUS Federal Judiciary Study Going on Now

At the 2024 LWVUS Convention the delegates voted to conduct a one-year study of the Federal Judiciary. The study will:

- “1. engage legal and academic experts to help clarify judicial accountability, the role of rule of law, and safeguarding judicial independence,
2. gain grassroots input from Leagues, and
3. formulate a position around the Federal Judiciary for Leagues to use to carry out the mission of empowering voters and defending democracy.”

LWVUS says “The study would also serve as a pilot for ways to streamline the process and procedures for effectuating a study within the League.” The suggested timeline for the study is July 2024 – June 2025.

Background

The League and other groups have become increasingly concerned about financial impropriety and ethical compromises in the US Supreme Court. Actions by the Justices have triggered conversations about Money in Politics or campaign finance rules. The League concluded that rules on campaign finance are not applicable to the Federal courts. The LWVUS Advocacy and Litigation Committee (ALC) reviewed each League’s positions to look for positions on U.S. Supreme Court judicial independence, ethics compliance, and transparency. No position was found.

The ALC decided that the normal two-year study period would be too long in this instance, as the need for advocacy is now. The committee also decided that League advocacy could be important, as good government is our priority. Thus the League needs a position, and sooner rather than later. The League must be visible and influential in this discussion. So, the ALC asked the LWVUS board to consider a one-year study of the Federal Judiciary.

Key Dates:

- February 7: Study guide and consensus questions will be sent to state and local Leagues
- February 7–April 14: Leagues will hold consensus meetings and complete consensus questions
- April 14: Deadline for submission of consensus results

What can you do?

Go to this link for study resources, periodic updates and reports: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/advocacy-litigation/2024-2025-federal-judiciary-study-process-committee-and>

Prepare for and participate in your League’s Consensus meetings.

Local League News

Central New Mexico

By Starlyn Brown, President

General Election

VOTE411 and Printed Guide

More than 60 LWVCNM Members volunteered and worked on the voter guide.

We included all four counties: Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrence and Valencia in the printed guide for the first time. LWVCNM managed 74 candidate races. We had an 81% response rate overall, 78% for the printed guide, with three candidates entering responses into VOTE411 after the print deadline.

We initially printed and distributed 28,000 Voter Guides. The guides were printed and distributed about 10 days earlier than previous years. Demand was so high that we printed and distributed an additional 4000 guides.

Flyers promoting the Voter Guide and online resources were distributed to Albertson's Markets in Bernalillo and Sandoval County in the *Prime Time Magazine*.

Publicity Activities

- Karen Wentworth interview by *Prime Time Magazine*
- Starlyn Brown interviews on KOAT, KUNM, and KKOB radio
- Presentation to American Association of University Women
- News releases sent to all local media about VOTE411 and the Voter Guide
- Information used in the *Sandoval Signpost*, and *After the Thunder*, an online site in Jemez Springs
- Columns on constitutional amendments for *NM Jewish Journal*, *Sandoval Signpost*, *Gallup Independent* via NM News Service
- Presentation to the UNM LGBTQ+ Resource Center
- Presentation to UNM Theater Department Class
- Rail Yards Market

Voter Registration

We held over 16 voter registration events and registered over 189 voters.

We have been asked to attend 3 naturalization ceremonies to educate and register new citizens. The ceremonies are in December and April with two ceremonies each day.

New Mexico Black Leadership Council

Starlyn Brown was invited to attend the November 20, 2024 New Mexico Black Leadership Council (NMBLC) meeting. She gave a presentation about the League and the League's General Election activities. At the meeting an open letter denouncing racist texts and mailed letters received after the election, was discussed. LWVCNM,

LWVLA, and LWVNM all signed as sponsors of the letter.

Civics Education

Liz Shields spoke about voting and civic engagement in general to seniors at two Albuquerque high schools: 140 students in 5 classes at La Cueva High School, and 91 students at Albuquerque High School.

We have been asked to participate in Albuquerque Public Schools Social Studies Professional Development Day on January 6th to present breakout sessions to teachers.

Events

Our December 12, 2024 Monthly educational meeting was “Dignity Not Detention - Beyond Detention Walls: Understanding Immigrant Detention in New Mexico.” The presenters were Sophia Genovese, Managing Attorney for the Asylum and Detention Programs and Alondra Reyes, Policy and Partnerships Manager from the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center.

The Vortex Theater play event “What the Constitution Means to Me” written by Heidi Schreck and directed by Leslee Richards was well attended. The play is very thought provoking. If you ever get a chance to see it, you should.

Our Holiday Open House was December 8th at Betsy Carlson’s house. The event was very well attended, and the conversation was lively!

Southern New Mexico

By Jo Galván Nash, President

Post Election

Closing the election books made us realize how much we accomplished in the southern part of the state. Like the other Leagues, we had numerous volunteers working on get-out-the-vote tasks ranging from Voter Guides to candidate forums. Speaking of those activities, SNM distributed 20,000 printed Voter Guides (half in English, half in Spanish). And, for the first time, we placed the nonpartisan publications at every Las Cruces public, charter and private school. We also partnered with Public Media KRWG TV to hold televised candidate forums, and we hosted two well attended forums at City Hall.

Thousands of bilingual flyers were inserted into utility bills in the southern end of the County, primarily in Sunland Park and Santa Teresa. We also hosted many voter registration events and were the guests on local talk radio. During our election debrief we realized that our social media messages did not reach very many people; many people did not mention seeing the state League’s social media messages that were distributed throughout the state. Also, only 25% of the Doña Ana County candidates answered the Vote411 Voter Guide questions in Spanish. These are areas we will work on for future elections.

Legislative Conversation

We had no time for rest after the General Election as we quickly turned our attention to the annual SNM Legislative Conversation and Social. The yearly gathering is co-hosted by AAUW and NAACP. Nearly 100 guests, including seven of our area legislators, attended the complimentary luncheon paid by local businesses and con-



tributors. We also held a raffle with many donated gifts that raised over \$800. One of the coolest things we did was provide our legislators “democracy rocks” hand-painted by League member Rebecca Courtney. We also raffled one.

Prior to hearing what issues our lawmakers will work on during the 2025 session, we shared the League’s legislative priorities with the top three being: increasing the royalty rate on oil/gas revenues to provide additional funding for the state’s land grant permanent fund; amending the state Constitution to establish an independent commission to enact salaries for legislators; and increasing educational funding to prevent chronic absenteeism and for multicultural needs. Our League will be working with the state Action Team to help advocate for these and other measures.



LWVSNM, AAUW and NAACP listened to southern NM legislators as they discussed priorities for the 2025 session.

Santa Fe County

By Debbie Helper, SFC Liaison

Membership: We have 171 members and are actively seeking renewals for about 50% of them. We have five life members and 12 student members. We are in the process of training with ChapterSpot in anticipation of the launch date of Feb 1 for the new membership platform.

Voter Services: Much of our efforts since the last meeting were around the general election. Below are the Voter Services activities and statistics presented at our October Board meeting. At least in part due to our efforts, voter turnout in Santa Fe County was 73%, which was higher than the state average.

VS Statistics:

- GOTV: 815 individuals served at the various GOTV tabling sites.
- Candidate Forums: NM Representative District 50 (9/30/24); US Representative District 3 (10/7/24). As of 10/8/2024, there were 245 online and in-person attendees at the NM Representative District 50 forum (approximately 45 in-person and 200 online).
- GOTV Sites: Santa Fe Farmers Market; The Food King Market; Santa Fe Community College, Senior Residence, Senior Centers.
- Canvassing (Partner with NAACP): To date - 229 individuals (either left information or canvassed with commitment to vote).

- **Materials:** Distributed 1,823 copies of League voter information materials to 20 Community- Based Organizations, Unhoused Shelters, Senior Centers and Senior Residences.
- **Election Inserts and Voter Guides:** Distributed to 46,000 as an insert in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. An additional 800 copies distributed at tabling sites, high schools, Community Based Organizations and County Clerk's early voting site.
- **Registered 500 students across five high schools:** Santa Fe Prep, Tierra Encantada, Monte del Sol, Capital High and Santa Fe High.
- **Programs about voter information, mis/dis/mal information and the use of Vote411** were presented to area high school history students by Kelly and Stephanie, reaching 180 students.

We also sent a letter to our membership to thank them for their efforts around the election and encouraging them to continue to work with the League on local and state issues as well as protection of democracy in general and women's rights issues in particular.

PR/Communications:

Social Media: Judy Robinson has been posting on Facebook, X and Instagram with the social media management app Followr. Henry Lopez of Integrated Tech has been working on expanding our media presence and helping us develop content. He also coordinated videotaping and promoting the candidate forums with Kelly Davis.

We have just added TikTok and YouTube accounts and have linked them to the website. We will send out a Constant Contact announcing these new platforms to our membership. We are currently discussing whether to continue on the social media platform X and exploring adding Blue Sky. We're hoping to get our two new high school members from the New Mexico School for the Arts to make a TikTok about the League, with Henry's help.

Website: Stephanie Schlanger continuously updated the website with news and election information and is improving the website based upon feedback from visitors. Links for our TikTok and YouTube platforms are active now on the site.

Action and Advocacy: The committee continues to monitor city and county governance meetings as well as SFPS School Board and Santa Fe Community College Board meetings. Members met with the former city manager to discuss priorities and progress. We are still trying to get local officials to respond to requests for presentations on Wastewater Issues and Broadband.

Events: Invitations to Save the Date have gone out to our local legislators for the Legislator Luncheon to be held January 8th at La Fonda.

State Convention: Danis Kelly, our arrangements chair, has been working diligently to find adequate and reasonably priced space for the State Convention planned for Santa Fe April 25-27, 2025. We've settled on The Lodge (located at the north end of town at the convergence of I25 and St Francis Drive. It is currently undergoing renovation under new management and may not be providing food service at that time. They can provide beverage service and we would be allowed to make our own catering arrangements. Discounted meeting room space would be \$500/day for a capacity of 40, hotel room rentals on site would be \$149/night. Barbara Calef told me the cost for the convention materials was \$350 when LWVLA hosted in 2023. So, my estimate of the cost per attendee would be at least \$45 for 30 attendees, \$35 for 40 attendees and an additional \$30 each for 2 boxed lunches. Any

banquet space that was looked at would be at least \$100 per person (for Saturday dinner). Parking would be free at The Lodge.

Los Alamos Report

By Felicia Orth, President

Voter Guide: The 16-page Voter Guide for the general election was distributed to every household in Los Alamos County, with extra copies placed at the libraries and polling places.

Candidate Forum: Our general election candidate forum was held on October 7 at UNM-LA, with a large and engaged crowd. We had full candidate participation for the County Council race, with three Democrats and one Republican. Other local races were not contested. Acoustic issues have prompted us to investigate portable microphones we could own and set up ourselves.

Lunch with a Leader: In October, we heard a presentation from Stephanie Nakhleh, co-founder of Los Alamos's third online news publication, *Boomtown*. On November 1, we heard from the County Environmental Services Manager, Angelica Gurule, on the Climate Action Plan presented to County Council on November 12 and adopted that night. On November 21, we heard from Dan Osborn, Housing and Special Project Manager for Los Alamos County.

Los Alamos High School presentation: On October 23, Felicia presented a slide show to 500 high school juniors and seniors who had requested information about the League and specifically about the Electoral College. The presentation was enthusiastically received. A few dozen of the students with a birthday before November 5 were either registered or planning to register to vote.

Looking forward: We have been participating in Chapter Spot training ahead of the big change on the national level in the handling of membership fees and donations. We will plan a forum on health care following a review of answers to the County healthcare survey. We are planning a Legislative Preview for January, ahead of the session, as well as a general membership event.



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Please consider helping your local League or LWVNM to pay for our voter guides and candidate forums. You can send a tax-deductible gift by check to your local League or to LWVNM. See www.lwvnm.org for more information and links to our local Leagues. Thank you for making democracy work!

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that helps the public play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Anyone 16 years of age or older, male or female, may become a member. The League of Women Voters never endorses candidates for office or supports political parties.