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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.



League Day at the Legislature 2018
January 31 and February 1

Legislative Reception, Wednesday, January 31,
5:30-7:30 PM
Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail*

Tax Reform Proposals in the 2018 Session
Richard Anklam, President/ED, New Mexico Tax Research Institute, Former Assistant Sec./Dir. of Tax Policy for New Mexico Taxation and Revenue

League Day, Thursday, February 1, 10:15 AM to Noon
Morgan Hall, New Mexico Land Office, 310 Old SF Trail

Messaging for the Ethics Commission State Ballot & what we want in 2019 enabling legislation
Viki Harrison, Executive Director, Common Cause - New Mexico

League Supported Revenue Generators in the 2018 Session
Bill Jordan, Senior Policy Advisor/Government Relations, NM Voices for Children See details of all talks on Page 3

* Garrett's Desert Inn, located down the street from the capitol, is offering us a special group rate of \$60 plus \$10 per each additional person (not including tax) for any size room based on availability. Call 1-800-888-2145 or 505-982-1851 to reserve a room. You must reserve your room by January 10 with the code "Swing Vote" to get this discounted rate.

President's Corner



Greetings, Fellow League Members!

I encourage League members to attend the 2018 LWVUS Biennial Convention from June 28 to July 1, 2018 in Chicago. You can see details here: [Convention 2018](#). The focus will be on the League's mission, Campaign for Making Democracy Work®, and their "transformational journey." It will be an important occasion to weigh in on these issues as well as to interact with a lot of other activists from around the nation. These interactions are, in my opinion, the highlight of Convention. In addition, it is a great way to see grassroots in action, with caucuses, motions from the floor, and spirited debates. And, of course, it's CHICAGO!

LWVUS is asking state and local Leagues not to propose new national studies or position reviews during program planning. The League focus is its Campaign for Making Democracy Work®. LWVUS will look to state and local Leagues for leadership on voting rights, voter protection and mobilization, election reform, campaign finance/money in politics and redistricting.

LWVUS has been working to strengthen the League brand and engage "new and future" activists. The work includes increasing membership, diversity, relevance and fiscal stability. Their statements have been fairly vague so far, and we are all waiting for more specifics at Convention.

2018 in New Mexico

LWVNM is working on a plan to activate voters ahead of the 2018 election, when many

important decisions will be made. We are hoping to mount ads and a social media campaign in addition to all the local initiatives. Local Leagues are working hard to register voters, and we also will have to educate them. In addition to all the candidates, there will be a constitutional amendment that would authorize an independent ethics commission. Currently New Mexico is one of only eight states without an ethics commission. I hope it will be "all hands on deck" in 2018 – we will have to address all the doubts sown by claims of "fake news" plus the actual fake news. Public confidence in the legislative and executive branches of government as well as voting systems is terribly eroded. This is frightening and threatening to a healthy democracy.

The good news is that this is where the League shines with its trusted name and hard-working volunteers. It will be up to us to shine a light on the issues and candidates the voters will be choosing next year.

The 2018 legislative session begins at noon on January 16. The LWVNM Legislative Reception is on January 31, and League Day at the Legislature is February 1; please plan on joining us, and do sign up for a room at Garrett's Desert Inn. Sign up by January 10 to get the special rate. After that, the price will depend on availability.

— Judy Williams, LWVNM President
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League Days 2018 will focus on current issues:

Legislative Reception, Wednesday, January 31, 5:30-7:30 PM Garrett's Desert Inn, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail

Presentation: Tax Reform Proposal(s) in the 2018 session

Presented by Richard Anklam, President and Executive Director of the New Mexico Tax Research Institute

In the 2017 Special Session the Legislature appropriated \$400,000 to hire a firm to conduct a study of the New Mexico tax structure. There is bipartisan support for reforming the New Mexico tax structure, but there is disagreement on how it should be restructured. The firm hired to conduct the study reported to a joint meeting of the Legislative Finance Committee and the Tax & Revenue Stabilization Committee in December 2017. That information will be used to develop tax reform proposals in the 2018 legislative session. Our speaker will address the study and the proposed tax reform legislation.

The New Mexico Tax Research Institute (NMTRI) is a nonpartisan, member-supported non-profit organization that analyzes the effects of tax policies on New Mexico. NMTRI studies and informs the public and tax policy makers about taxation issues. Their taxation principles, fact sheets, and publications on tax policy are available at <http://www.nmtri.org>.

League Day, Thursday, February 1 Committee Hearings at the Roundhouse starting at 8:00 AM

The 2018 Legislative Session is limited to budget items, vetoed legislation from 2017, and legislation that the Governor puts on her call. Key to this session will be opposing some of the regressive policies and tax loopholes from recent years that have reduced the availability of funds for essential programs. The League will be supporting a number of tax proposals aimed at making New Mexico's tax structure more progressive and generating revenue for essential services.

Packets of materials will be available at the reception Wednesday evening and at the League table in the East Hall of the Roundhouse on Thursday. Each local League will appoint at least one contact person who will facilitate visits with their legislators. We want to show everyone how to navigate the Roundhouse and make your voice heard at the Legislature.

Education on League Issues - 10:15 AM to Noon Morgan Hall, New Mexico Land Office, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail

Messaging for the 2018 Ethics Commission State Ballot Question and what we want in 2019 enabling legislation

Presented by Viki Harrison, Executive Director of Common Cause – New Mexico

In the 2017 session the Legislature approved House Joint Resolution 8, which authorized a Constitutional Amendment creating a State Ethics Commission. It will be placed on the 2018

ballot for voter approval. This has been a long-time priority for the League and we need to assure that it is passed. The ballot question assigns the responsibility for creating the ethics commission to the 2019 Legislature. Advocates must ensure that enabling legislation creates an independent and effective commission with the powers and resources needed to fulfill its duties.

Proposed Revenue Generators in the 2018 session

Presented by: Bill Jordan, Policy Director, New Mexico Voices for Children Convener of the New Mexico Fairness Project

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports a tax system that is fair and progressive, putting more tax burden on those who can afford it. The League also supports a taxation system that generates enough revenue to fund essential services. Since 2004 our taxation system has become less fair and less progressive. As a consequence, the tax system has failed to generate the revenue needed to fund essential services. It is time to turn that around. The Fairness Project is a loose coalition of groups, including the LWVNM, dedicated to proposing revenue generators that can address the fairness and sufficiency of our tax system.

LWVNM Advocacy Workshop, Santa Fe, NM - Dec. 9, 2017



Senator Peter Wirth (D. Santa Fe, District 25), began his remarks with a comment about working collaboratively with the Republicans. “We do talk together and work together, despite these difficult political times. We actually did, in a bi-partisan fashion, accomplish a lot.” They work with a sense of mutual respect, he continued. Wirth, who has served in the legislature since 2004, has participated in the League’s advocacy workshops for several years. He expressed pride in the fact that there has not been a call of the Senate (when the doors are locked to force the legislators to vote) or a blast of a bill (bypassing committee consideration, going directly to the floor) in years. Webcasting has made the legislature’s actions more transparent and easier to follow.

He advised the audience to be succinct in communicating with legislators. “Be strategic to move a bill forward.” Get the constituents of committee members to express support for the bill; don’t be scared to engage; be coordinated in how you present; line up speakers from different parts of the state. Most bills are assigned to two committees. Wirth recommended efforts to sway each committee in turn.

Senator Sander Rue (R. Albuquerque, District 23) explained that it is in the Interim Committees, which meet from May to December, that the bills are fleshed out. Rue commented that in addition to webcasting, the legislature is now archiving committee hearings, so people can review the hearings on the legislative website, <http://www.nmlegis.gov/>. Most committee hearings provide an opportunity for public testimony. He also recommended coordinating with colleagues, warning that form letters are ineffective. Instead, advocates should send personal emails. When you speak before a committee, he said, be succinct and on-point. And learn patience.

warning that form letters are ineffective. Instead, advocates should send personal emails. When you speak before a committee, he said, be succinct and on-point. And learn patience.

Jim Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of Disability Rights New Mexico, has been involved in the legislative process since 1979. He reinforced the idea that citizens can have a substantial impact on our laws. He recalled that New Mexico was the last state to adopt the federal special education program. When that bill was introduced, it was referred to House Appropriations. But, the leadership in the House didn't want to hear it and re-scheduled the bill three times; discussion continued until midnight. The opposition thought they were home free. However, the fact that many parents were still present led to passage!



Speakers (L to R) Sander Rue, Jim Jackson and Peter Wirth. Photo by Judy Williams

All three speakers reminded the audience that NM is the only state with a volunteer legislature. Despite investing lots of their time, the legislators are not paid and do not have a staff, but must deal with thousands of bills. These folks are just like us — teachers, small business owners, and retirees who want to make a difference.



A video of the workshop will soon be on the website — <http://www.lwvnm.org/>.

Jackson recommended his organization's legislative toolkit: <http://www.drnw.org/uploads/PDFs/Tool%20Kit%20Complete%202018.pdf>

—Judith Binder, Co-President, LWVCNM

Help Needed for League Days at the Legislature!

We need volunteers for the League Days Reception on Wednesday Jan. 31st from 5:30 to 7:30 pm—Greeters, food committee, trouble-shooting and audio set-up.

Volunteers also needed to staff the table at the Roundhouse Feb. 1st from 8 am to 1 pm—Bring and set up the table, greet visitors and answer questions about the League.

Contact: Richard Mason at polirich@aol.com

LWVNM Reports and Updates: **Natural Resources Report**

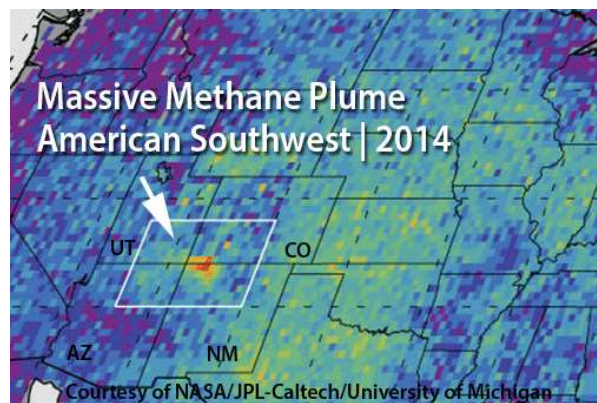
Here is a summary of some of the issues the Natural Resources Committee has been following:

Coal

As of December 31, the two largest of the four units at San Juan Generating Station in Farmington will be permanently closed. This was the result of a long fight over closure and reduction in burning coal. PNM says it will close the entire plant in 2022. We reported earlier that PNM would divest its share of the Four Corners Power Plant in 2031. The Navajo Generating station in Arizona will likely close as well.

Natural Gas

The federal government on December 8 announced that it is delaying the rule that would require companies to capture waste methane resulting from leaks and venting. Methane is far more polluting than natural gas; there is a methane bloom over the Four Corners, making this a serious issue for New Mexico. This delay comes despite an October federal court requiring that the rule be published. Some companies have said they will voluntarily curb the emissions. Many experts believe implementation would save companies money and earn more for the state and federal governments in the form of royalties.



Drilling near Chaco Canyon



Native and environmental organizations have asked for a moratorium on drilling in the Greater Chaco Area, which extends 20 miles beyond the boundaries of the Chaco Culture National Historic Park, until a new resource management plan amendment has been completed. They have also asked that the revision include a public health and social impact report. The BLM has deferred all leases within a ten-mile buffer area of the park, but last summer scheduled a lease sale for next March of 26 parcels beyond the buffer but

within the Greater Chaco Area. The comment period for the proposed leases ended October 20. The BLM is currently reviewing the comments.

—*Judy Williams, Co-Chair Natural Resources Committee*

The Utah Transfer of Public Lands Act



Utah's governor signed H.B. 148 into law in March 2012. This legislation demands that the federal government transfer 31.2 million acres – 60% of Utah's land area - of federally owned lands to the state by 12/31/14. Lands to be transferred are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Utah portion of the Glen Canyon Recreation Area. The federal government has ignored Utah's demand.

In 2013 – perhaps a bit late in the game - Utah enacted a second piece of legislation requiring an analysis of the economic impact of the land transfer. Although the analysis is specific to Utah, it seems reasonable to assume that the issues and impacts related to federal to state land transfers also are relevant to other Western states.

The authors of the 700+ page report say: *“In conclusion, from a strictly financial perspective, it is likely that the state of Utah could take ownership of the lands and cover the costs to manage them. Our research also suggests that it could put a strain on the state's funding priorities in the early years as the state adjusts to the loss of federal dollars, evaluates land resources and conditions, and develops programs to replace those now managed by federal agencies.”*

It appears that this conclusion is unrealistically optimistic; the authors raise a number of issues that would increase Utah's costs, but they fail to factor those costs into their cost vs. revenue calculations.

For example, the study modeled oil and gas revenues (the largest source of revenue from public lands in Utah) using different price scenarios, royalty rates, state royalty shares, and new production levels. Even their lowest price estimates, however, exceed 2017 prices. Also, the analysis assumed that all future royalty payments could be used to cover the direct management costs and payments-in-lieu-of-taxes currently incurred and paid by the federal agencies. However, Utah already receives a share of the royalties from mineral production on federal land and currently allocates these dollars (~\$150 million) to other state agencies – meaning that those dollars would need to be replaced with new revenue sources. The report's estimate of how much it would cost Utah to manage the transferred lands did not account for these dollars.

For the LWVNM Transfer of Public Lands study, the value of the Utah report is the identification of factors that need to be considered in determining whether a federal to state transfer of public lands will be economically beneficial to a state. These factors are summarized below and illustrated with cost implications based on the Utah case.

- Federal lands are managed under a multiple-use, sustained-yield mandate whereas state lands, especially state trust lands, are often managed under a profit- or revenue-maximization mandate. This is why transfer advocates often argue that states are more efficient land managers. However, changing to a revenue-maximization mandate (to, for

example, raise more funds for public education) may have implications for public access and thereby have negative effects on current revenue sources.

- States do not necessarily have agencies corresponding to the federal agencies, meaning that there would be start-up costs to develop the expertise and management plans for some categories of transferred lands. For example, Utah does not have an agency with expertise in forest management on the scale of the USFS; they would need to spend a significant amount (~\$25 million) up front to develop a management plan.
- Currently the federal government is responsible for the highly unpredictable costs of wildfires on federal lands; land transfers would not only shift these costs onto the state (which must balance its budget) but would also take federal fire-fighting resources away from the state.
- Federal agencies are required to provide access to and manage programs related to federal lands even without sufficient budget dollars, resulting in deficits. According to the analysis, the total cost estimate for BLM and USFS deferred maintenance in Utah was \$100 million – another liability the state would assume.
- Clean-up and remediation costs for Utah's 8-11,000 abandoned mine sites, in the range of \$26-30 million, would likely become a state liability.
- An immediate impact of the land transfer would be the loss of \$150 million in annual payroll dollars coming into Utah from the federal budget. Losing these outside dollars would have a negative ripple effect on Utah's economy.



- Economists have developed models to estimate 'net consumer benefit,' a concept that measures the dollar value to a consumer over and above the "real dollar" cost of a recreational experience. Consumers are more likely to spend money on activities when they perceive they will receive a greater net consumer benefit. For recreational activities in Utah the analysis estimated a total net consumer benefit of about \$7 billion. Changes to the management mandate for public lands could have a negative impact on this benefit and, in turn, have a negative impact on the actual dollars consumers are willing to spend on recreation in Utah.

In summary, taking into account all these factors, there does not appear to be a convincing argument that Utah would be better off economically if it succeeds in obtaining the federal lands demanded by H.B. 148. This appears to be a case of "be careful what you wish for!"

For those who are interested, the full report can be found at:

<http://publiclands.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/1.%20Land%20Transfer%20Analysis%20Final%20Report.pdf>

—Chris Furlanetto, *Transfer of Federal Public Lands Committee*

Report from the Transfer of Federal Lands Study Committee

The Transfer of Federal Public Lands Committee has been very busy during the last couple of months reading documents and conducting interviews. Chris Furlanetto completed a review of the 2014 Utah Land Transfer Analysis, which she has summarized for this issue of La Palabra. In November committee members met with State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn and also with Deputy Land Commissioner Laura Riley to learn how New Mexico's trust lands are administered and to ask their opinion of the transfer proposal.

The State Land Office (SLO) is charged with administering state trust lands to produce as much income as possible for the beneficiaries while conserving the value of the land for future generations. Commissioner Dunn has developed an archaeology policy and an endangered species policy for the SLO. However, he has no control over the lease language and terms, which are contained in statute. And, the SLO has no input regarding the siting of oil wells. That is controlled by the Oil Conservation Division in the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, which has far too few inspectors for adequate enforcement.



BLM lands

Commissioner Dunn told the committee that he does not favor the transfer of federal land to the states because 90% of SLO revenue comes from below ground, and 100% of the problems are above ground. However, he would like to acquire the federal subsurface mineral rights under private lands. He says the ranchers, who own most of these lands, favor transfer of the mineral rights and would welcome drilling.

On December 5 committee members met with Acting BLM State Director Aden Seidlitz to ask about BLM operations in New Mexico. Below is a summary of what we have learned so far about the policies of the BLM in New Mexico.

As we reported in the Fall 2017 La Palabra, the 1976 Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, flip-ma) governs the way in which the public lands administered by the BLM are managed, "so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people."

In accordance with FLPMA, the BLM's responsibility is to administer public lands "on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield" of resources. The multiple uses include energy development, livestock grazing, mining, timber harvesting, and outdoor recreation. At the same time, they must conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources (such as wilderness areas, wild horse and wildlife habitat, artifacts, and dinosaur fossils). Consideration must be given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest financial return.

With regard to the multiple-use, sustained-yield mandate for the BLM, Seidlitz said that FLP-MA continues to govern federal land management, but different administrations have different priorities. The Obama administration placed more emphasis on protection of resources and multiple uses of lands; the current administration is placing less emphasis on conservation and more on resource extraction. This administration believes that local communities have been hurt by too much emphasis on protection.

However, BLM policy is still to make resources available for communities while improving the condition of watersheds, landscapes, and wildlife habitat. In this state, plans for restoring landscapes to their original condition involve the BLM and the USFS and fall under an umbrella program called Restore New Mexico, which is coordinated by the NM Association of Conservation Districts. Seidlitz said there are about 300 partners, including ranchers. Since 2005 invasive species have been removed and unused roads reclaimed from more than 3.5 million acres.

Development of oil and gas resources on lands managed by the BLM follows a statutory process. Seidlitz told the committee that the industry nominates the parcels they would like to lease. The BLM performs an environmental assessment (NEPA) of the requested parcels, followed by a public comment period and possibly a protest period. Those parcels that pass the environmental hurdle are offered at auction. After winning the lease, the company must still apply to the BLM for a permit to drill and must consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service about protecting threatened and endangered species in the area.



Photo from the NM True Campaign

In response to a question about giving the state the federal subsurface mineral rights as Commissioner Dunn would like, Seidlitz remarked that the industry is really not interested in these lands unless they are in or near producing areas. He believes the potential economic benefit of such a transfer has been overblown.

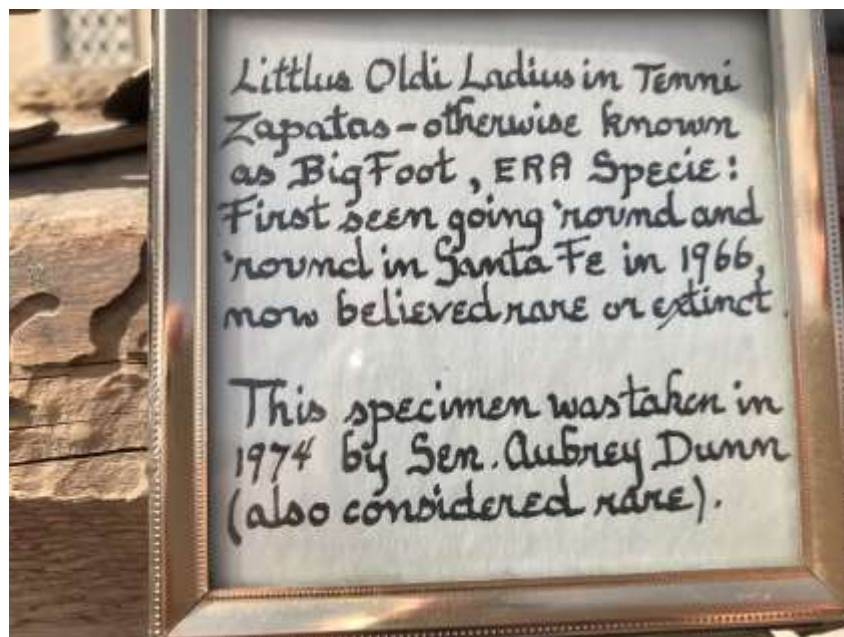
Land swaps also require a NEPA assessment and an appraisal before they can be finalized. The BLM generally investigates more acreage than proposed because swapped parcels must have equivalent market prices – they want to be sure enough acreage has been approved once the appraisal is completed. The BLM does not typically propose such swaps, but responds when landowners approach them.

During the winter the TFPL Committee plans to continue meeting with public officials and others to learn about the policies of the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service in New Mexico.

— *Barbara Calef, Co-Chair Transfer of Federal Lands Study Committee*



“Little Old Ladies in Tennis Shoes....”



When the TFPL Committee visited Land Commissioner Dunn on November 13, he presented us with a memento that the League of Women Voters gave to his father, Senator Aubrey Dunn, in 1974. The senator, who died in 2012, had referred to the League activists as “little old ladies in tennis shoes.” The relic now resides at the LWVSFC office. Do you know more about this? Please contact League President Judy Williams: jkwilliams24@gmail.com

Education Updates:

New Mexico has better prospects for improving public education than it has had for many years, but it also faces serious obstacles. With revenue projections of \$200 million more available for state funding for the next fiscal year over current appropriations, we are hopeful that legislators and the governor will approve strategies to increase educational achievement and improve our economy. However, we are deeply concerned that the NM Public Education Department (PED) isn't taking this opportunity to request an increase to the State Equalization Guarantee. Instead PED presented a budget proposal to the Legislative Finance Committee in December that is flat.

NM's public school spending is still 11.7% below the 2008 level despite recovery from the Great Recession. PED seems to be ignoring the recommendations included in a November 2017 Legislative Finance Committee longitudinal analysis of academic performance. The report identifies a number of targeted educational reforms that LWVNM also supports and will advocate for in the upcoming legislative session. It says "The state needs changes in three key areas— access, administration, and accountability— to improve student achievement over the long-term. More students need access to PreK and K-3 Plus, they need schools implementing best practices, and they need highly effective teachers. The school system needs to ensure consistent, proper implementation of best practices and evidence-based interventions."

"NM's public school spending is still 11.7% below the 2008 level despite recovery from the Great Recession. PED seems to be ignoring the recommendations included in a November 2017 Legislative Finance Committee longitudinal analysis of academic performance."

Part of the systemic problem is the way the PED allocates funds. For many years, educators, advocates, and legislators have urged the PED to use the "above-the-line" funding formula to distribute dollars equitably. Instead, the PED persists in making districts and charter schools apply for reading improvement grants and other funds, believing that competition for "below-the-line" funding will incentivize schools and teachers to improve. As a result of this, thousands of at-risk students never get the instruction and supplemental educational support services for which they are eligible. Examples abound of PED's failure to provide essential services. The most egregious example relates to the use of funds earmarked for special education that were spent on other programs. NM legislators and officials are expecting the US Department of Education's settlement decision soon on the \$85 million of non-federal funds that were not used for special education, as required.

We expect legislators to propose two Constitutional amendments related to education for the 2018 ballot. One would tap a small percentage of the \$21.6 billion in the Land Grant and/or Severance Permanent Funds for early childhood education. The other would restore the percentage of total state funds used for education to 5.8%. The percentage is scheduled to be reduced automatically to 5% in 2018.

Kudos go to the bipartisan Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), which meets year-round and has permanent staff researching best practices and policies of high-achieving states and foreign countries. Legislators on this committee go beyond politics when considering legislation to endorse and promote during the session. See the links on p. 13 for further reading.

Related Reading

NM's Legislative Education Study Committee's work plan includes public school-related legislation under consideration and analyses of financial and programmatic aspects of the New Mexico educational system and possible improvements. https://www.nmlegis.gov/Publications/Work_Plans/ALESCworkplan17.pdf

The LESC has been learning about best educational practices of high-performing states and countries, many of which are included in the National Council of State Legislatures' report "No Time to Lose." Please see recommendations for transforming American education to improve economic and social conditions in a globally competitive world: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/no-time-to-lose-how-to-build-a-world-class-education-system-state-by-state.aspx#1>

NM's Legislative Finance Committee's November 2017 analysis describes challenges to improve student achievement with data and recommendations for system improvements, including investing in early childhood education. NM currently ranks 49th in educational outcomes nationally. https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Documents/Program_Evaluation_Reports/Longitudinal%20Student%20Performance%20Analysis%202017.pdf

—Meredith Machen, Education Chair

League Members Protest Sanitization of Science and Social Studies Instruction



Photo from the NY Times, New Mexico has made national news again for its education policies and outcomes. This fall, the state's strange changes in the science standards received widespread press attention and public scrutiny. In September, the NM Public Education Department (PED) posted a notice that it was accepting public comment for 30 days on the revisions. The League analyzed the changes and prompted a number of individuals and organizations to speak out against the sanitized standards and to push for adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in full and unaltered. Due to massive public outcry from citizens, educators, and scientists about the removal of references to evolution, climate change, the earth's age and other core topics, PED agreed to withdraw the faulty proposed standards. It also agreed to adopt the NGSS, which had been unanimously recommended by the 25-member NM Math and Science Advisory Committee in 2015. Thanks to these coordinated efforts, NM joins 19 other states in adopting the NGSS, the gold standards in science education.

Immediately after our successful action, many in the coalition mobilized quickly when Rep. Andres Romero, a history teacher and Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) member, found out about troubling changes that had been made to the social studies end-of-course (EoC)

exams. The EoC are not subject to the rulemaking transparency requirements for changing the standards, so there was no public notice. Sen. Mimi Stewart, LESC Chair, rearranged the November agenda to allow the PED to explain its rationale for the changes along with expert testimony followed by public comment.

Dr. Lois Rudnick, American Studies professor emerita, UMass-Boston, testified against the elimination of important topics before the LESC on behalf of concerned citizens and educators. Among the items scratched out from the social studies EoC assessments were slavery and racial injustice, Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights movement, the role of trusts and trust busting, the atomic bombs, the Cold War arms race, and *Roe v. Wade*. The legislative process for law-making was also eliminated along with other crucial civic, historical, social, political, and economic topics essential to the understanding of democracy in America.

Even though Matt Montaña, the PED official in charge of the EoC testified to the LESC that he had the power to reverse the changes, the PED Secretary-Designate told the NM PED Family Cabinet on December 2 that the social studies deletions will not be restored this year. In response to the outcry, PED may drop the “Blueprints” that made hundreds of changes to the EoC assessments in 72 subject areas. PED insists that teachers are free to teach topics that have been eliminated, but when teacher evaluations are heavily based on student performance on required tests, we know that what is not tested doesn’t get taught.

The secretive politicization of NM’s curriculum is difficult to detect because teachers aren’t being notified of what has been changed. We are encouraging PED to use the expertise of advisory committees rather than consultants who are paid to promote a revisionist agenda that omits significant subject matter.

We appreciate all those who spoke out and showed up at the hearings. Continued vigilance is needed for effective advocacy.

—Meredith Machen, *Education Chair*

Local League News

League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico



The speaker at our October Luncheon was Dr. Aroop Mangalik, a physician associated with the UNM Health Sciences Center for Ethics. Dr. Mangalik has been active in efforts to reduce medically futile treatments. He is a strong advocate for end of life choices and patient comfort. Dr. Mangalik’s recent book, *Dealing with Doctors, Denial and Death: A Guide to Living Well with Serious Illness*, was published by Rowman & Littlefield. Our co-president, Leah Ingraham, spoke at the NE Heights meeting. Dr. Ingraham taught bio-ethics and end of life issues at the University of Iowa Medical School. Since moving to Albuquerque, she has

been providing presentations for the NM Health Association. She served on the Governing Board of the Iowa City Hospice.

Julianna Koob, Legislative Advocate for Planned Parenthood and the ACLU, addressed wom-

en's reproductive rights in November, specifically the on-going issue of abortion. She reviewed the efforts to support women's issues before the 2017 legislative session and focused on the strategies that supporters should employ to push legislation for better health care in 2018.

Jennie Lusk, Director of the NM Attorney General's Consumer and Family Advocacy Services Division, spoke in December about immigration and her work to protect young people who were brought into the United States illegally as children. Lusk is soliciting declarations of support from various New Mexico institutions of higher education and is preparing potential witnesses to testify in the national multi-state litigation.

Albuquerque was faced with a mayoral runoff election in November, and League members were seen on television, if only briefly. Cheryl Haaker was the time keeper for the forum presented by KOAT, Channel 7, and a brief promotion for our *Voter Guide* was telecast over KRQE, Channel 13. This extra election delayed publication of our 2018 *Who's Who*, which has now been carefully prepared by Margaret Krahenbuhl and her committee.

Diane Goldfarb and Judy Williams will meet with AAUW members on Saturday, January 6 to help them understand the legislative process and how to speak with legislators. The League of Women Voters has joined forces with Common Cause of New Mexico (CCNM) and other organizations and individuals to promote the passage of the state constitutional amendment to create a State Ethics Commission. We continue to participate in the APD Forward Coalition.

Donna Rigano, Membership Chair, reported 164 members including renewals, and household members. We now have seven lifetime members. The membership committee, which includes Andrea Targhetta, Niki Feldman, Helen Wright, Diane Goldfarb and Terry Quinn, is contacting new members to welcome them and learn about their interests and desired levels of participation. We continue to promote Zip Code Parties throughout our neighborhoods. These afternoon get-togethers can inspire companionship and the sharing of ideas about increasing the visibility of local Leagues.

We are faced with bitter political divisions, inadequate news reports, and election-rules disputes; we must work harder and encourage Republicans, Democrats and Independents to become more informed before the next election.

—*Judith Binder, Co-President LWVCNM*

LWV Greater Las Cruces

If there was a theme this season for the LWVGLC I would say it is LEAGUERS RISE UP. The Citizen Lobbyist Training on October 21st that we co-sponsored with Common Cause, the State Board Meeting November 11, and the Dinner with a Leader on the 13th all centered around that theme.

Julianna Koob, Legislative Advocate for Planned Parenthood and the ACLU, presented at the membership dinner on November 13th on "How to Talk about Abortion." The presentation was enthusiastically received by close to 40 members and guests who attended.

Proclamations!! The year 2018 will be Proclaimed to be the year of the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces both by the Las Cruces City Council and the Dona Ana County Commissioners. This will be the kickoff to the 50th Anniversary Celebration. The plans for the



Proclamation on display with Dale Yeo, Kim Sorensen and Marjorie Burr.

by Karen Douglas.

Facebook: Finally, we have a working Facebook page. Please help us out by liking our page. Make sure you go to [LeagueWomenVotersLasCrucesNM](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueWomenVotersLasCrucesNM). We have an old page that looks very similar that doesn't have an administrator and we haven't been able to delete it.

—*Kim Sorensen, President GLC*

LWV Santa Fe County

League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County co-sponsored a forum on "Media Literacy in a Fake News World" in September, organized by New Mexico Press Women. Other sponsors were the Society of Professional Journalists, the Santa Fe Public Library, Foundation for Open Government, and It's the People's Data.

Two general meetings were held with speakers. In October, Matt Brown, the City of Santa Fe Economic Development Director, spoke about his efforts to bring new development to Santa Fe. In November, we hosted two speakers who talked about municipal tax options - Adam Johnson, City Finance Director, spoke about the city gross receipts tax and how it is allocated, and Katherine Miller, the County Manager, informed us about the differences in state laws related to cities and counties in New Mexico.

On November 10 several of our members participated in an interesting and informative tour of the Early College Opportunities School in Santa Fe. This alternative public high school prepares students for skilled trades and college by providing hands-on learning experiences.

The Santa Fe County League will hold its annual holiday luncheon and silent auction on December 14. Dr. Veronica Garcia, Santa Fe Public School Superintendent, will speak.

Our annual legislative preview luncheon will be held January 10.

—*Laura Atkins, Representative, League of Women Voters, Santa Fe County*

50th Anniversary include a reunion picnic at Pioneer Women's Park, a traveling display of the history of our local League, a banquet, and several issues forums.

The Dinner with a Legislator will be held on December 11th. At the time of this report, we have seven legislators who have committed to attending the dinner. This is an annual event that has proven to be very popular with our members. It gives us a chance to ask our representatives about their priorities and expectations about the upcoming session and to advocate for our positions.

The presentation at the January 8th Lunch with a Leader is on the Nuclear Waste State Study led

Los Alamos League Report

LWVLA Co-President Becky Shankland reported on the forum on “Media Literacy in a Fake News World” that she attended in September. The event was sponsored by the Santa Fe Public Library, New Mexico Press Women, Society of Professional Journalists, League of Women Voters of Santa Fe, Foundation for Open Government, and It’s the People’s Data. She concluded that it is crucial that we put our money where our intellectual standards lie: WE MUST PAY FOR THE NEWSPAPERS AND MEDIA that we rely on and not assume that they’ll survive without our financial support.

The Los Alamos League sent a letter to the Public Education Department objecting to the changes they proposed to make to the Next Generation Science Standards and encouraged our members to do the same. Four of us attended the poorly organized hearing in Santa Fe.

Lunch with a Leader speakers over the past three months included a presentation by Jennifer Sublett and Lynn Bjorklund from the US Forest Service (USFS) about the history and policies of the USFS; a visit from our County Clerk and Elections Manager, who gave a rundown of the extensive responsibilities of their office, with emphasis on registering voters and conducting elections; and a conversation with Julianna Koob from Planned Parenthood and Janet Gotkin from NOW about how to talk about abortion.

Several League members attended the Legislative Education Study Committee meeting in October to express our disapproval of PED deletions from the social studies end-of- course exams, cheering Lois Rudnick for her excellent speech and also pleased with Meredith Machen’s comments.

We held a forum on the disposal of spent nuclear fuel on November 2. About 25 people attended. The speakers were Kathy Taylor, who is on the study committee and was a nuclear safety analyst at LANL, and John Heaton, chairman of the Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance Board, which is seeking to develop a Consolidated Interim Storage Facility in south-eastern New Mexico. You may watch the forum on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaR4iIYm08M&t=17s>

In our December Update we reported on a talk about the chromium plume in the Los Alamos aquifer given by LANL hydrogeologist Danny Katzman. He is the director of the effort to contain and reduce the size of the plume, which resulted when chromium that had been released into a canyon many years ago by the Los Alamos National Laboratory dissolved and eventually entered the aquifer. Officials of the county’s Department of Public Utilities also spoke, assuring the attendees that our drinking water is safe. This talk was sponsored by Voices of Los Alamos, a group formed after the 2016 presidential election.

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--Barbara Calef, LWVLA Co-President



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Please consider helping your local League or LWVNM to pay for our upcoming 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.