



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 President's Corner

By Hannah Burling
LWVNM President
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The League of Women Voters of the United States Convention was held last month in Columbus, Ohio. I highly recommend that all members attend at least one national convention. Four members of the New Mexico delegation attended in person, while the remainder participated virtually. Only one delegate received financial support to attend. As we look ahead to future conventions, I believe it would be worthwhile for the board to discuss how we can better support New Mexico's participation, and for local Leagues to consider whether they can help make attendance more accessible.

The convention offered a wide range of breakout sessions. I attended presentations on expanding VOTE411 outreach to Spanish-speaking communities, DEI & white supremacy and current litigation defending voting rights. I also presented at a breakout session on open primaries. Information from the VOTE411 outreach session has already been shared with League presidents and Voter Services Chairs, and we will be posting as many breakout session materials as possible in our shared Google Drive.

The convention was both inspiring and sobering. League leaders shared the extraordinary challenges they have faced in recent years. Following the presidential election, the LWVUS CEO and Board President required protective vests because of security threats. In a session on litigation best practices, we learned that emails are discoverable in legal proceedings, and the president of LWV of Louisiana has had her personal emails subpoenaed by the Secretary of State. The recommendation from League counsel was clear: whenever possible, conduct League business using organizational email accounts rather than personal ones. One particularly valuable conversation was with the president of LWV Hawai'i

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CNM President Starlyn Brown, CNM Vice-President Karen Douglas, LWVNM President Hannah Burling, LA President Leslie Wallstrom at the National Convention.

The President's Corner, continued

regarding their work supporting the recent bill to circumvent Citizens United. Since LWVUS has already authorized New Mexico to support similar efforts, the Action Committee will be moving forward with this initiative.

Closer to home, I was delighted to attend the League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico's new member event. It was exceptionally well organized, well attended, and provided a wonderful opportunity to meet to meet members I don't often have the chance to see.

Finally, I'd like to encourage all of us to think about how we collect and use data. Whether we're tracking voter outreach, advocacy efforts, membership engagement, or program participation, good data allows us to demonstrate our impact, improve our work, and strengthen future grant applications and fundraising efforts.

News Release from LWVUS / Last Updated: July 21, 2026

BOSTON – A coalition of nonpartisan voting rights groups renewed their urgent request for a preliminary injunction to block the US Postal Service (USPS) from implementing portions of President Trump's 2026 executive order restricting mail-in voting. Their motion argues that the executive order is unconstitutional, unlawful, and harmful to voters and the organizations that serve them.

The motion filed yesterday is the second time the groups have asked the US District Court in Massachusetts for a preliminary injunction. Their first request was denied earlier this month on the grounds that USPS was already barred from carrying out the executive order due to a preliminary injunction issued in separate litigation in the District of Columbia. However, the District of Massachusetts court expressly said the groups could refile their request for relief if the injunction in the DC case was stayed. On July 17, the Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit stayed that injunction, allowing USPS to move forward in implementing President Trump's order in some states.

The renewed filing from the nonpartisan groups explains that the executive order is causing significant and ongoing harm to their organizations as they work to help eligible voters, including their members, prepare to cast ballots in the November election. Among other provisions, the executive order directs USPS to refuse to transmit certain voters' ballots.

The motion was filed by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, the League of Women Voters, Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO), US Vote Foundation, OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA), and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

They are represented by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), ACLU of Massachusetts, Brennan Center for Justice, Legal Defense Fund (LDF), Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC (Advancing Justice – AAJC), and LatinoJustice PRLDEF.

The plaintiffs and their legal counsel issued the following statement:

"The nonpartisan organizations that filed this challenge work in every state to ensure eligible voters can exercise their rights and responsibilities as US citizens. Millions of those voters rely on mail ballots, including people with

disabilities, students, people in rural areas, military service members, Americans living overseas, and the elderly. The threat of the US Postal Service interfering with mail ballots—in violation of its Congressionally established role as a neutral mail carrier—is disrupting vital voting rights work and threatens to disenfranchise untold numbers of American citizens.

“The executive order is plainly unconstitutional and unlawful; it is yet another attempt by the president to unlawfully take control of elections from the states, deter eligible voters from casting ballots, and sow chaos as the November midterms approach. We’re renewing our urgent request for a preliminary injunction to protect the right to vote, uphold the rule of law, and enable voters and voting rights organizations to continue preparing for the midterms with full access to mail voting.”

Action Report

By Hannah Burling

The results of New Mexico’s first semi-open primaries were very encouraging. Officially, the number of voters rose from 22% in the 2024 primaries to 24.62%. The national average for the 2026 primaries was 22.9%.

But, in fact, the number of voters rose from 17% to 24.62%. Only Republican and Democrat voters were counted as the percentage base in the 2024 elections. Same day registration rose from 1% to 10%. There has been no need for defense.

Dick Mason and I met with Shawna Casebier, the interim director of the Legislative Council Service to go over issues of transparency and efficiency and we are discussing next steps.

We are still hoping for a memorial from Senator Figueroa calling for a redistricting task force.

Program Report

By Judy Williams, Program Chair

LWVUS Convention June 25-28

LWVUS proposed regrouping many of the existing positions into an overarching item: **Defending Democracy Under Siege**. This umbrella will include Voting Rights, Protecting Elections, Redistricting, Immigration, Individual Rights and The Presidency. This was approved.

The delegates approved concurrence with the LWVWA position on Protecting the Rights of Immigrants.

The LWVCO position on the Separation of Church and State and Religious Freedom was also approved by the convention.

A number of resolutions were approved (resolutions are statements of areas the members would like LWV to focus on). The resolutions concern:

1. Commitment to a nonpartisan civil service
2. Statehood for the District of Columbia
3. Support of continued mobilization to hold Congress accountable
4. Support for the National Popular Vote Compact
5. Concern that surveillance technologies aren’t being adequately managed to ensure oversight,

- transparency, and accountability
6. Opposition to human trafficking

LWVNM Council April 25, 2026

The Council approved as an emergency action the LWVSNM proposal for a state study of the impact of medical malpractice on access to care. Joanne Turnbull is the study leader.

Update:

At the CNM monthly meeting on July 9 Joanne Turnbull presented information on medical provider shortages in New Mexico, things that have been done and are left to do. The study parameters have not yet been defined. She will reach out to all the local Leagues for study members.

Voter Services Report

By Edwina Jaramillo, Acting Voter Services Director

The Voter Services (VS) Committee met in June and July for their monthly meeting to plan for the general election. A timeline has been provided and agreed to by the Committee.

The names of all the candidates for the general election have been uploaded into Vote411 so that we can begin sending candidate invitation letters. The local Leagues and I plan to send a letter to the primary candidate winners indicating that they can revise their responses to questions posed by the League or, if they have not yet responded, they still have an opportunity to do so. Another letter will be sent to all “new” candidates (write-ins, Independents/DTS, minor party, and retention judges) asking them to participate. All local Leagues have printer deadlines of mid-September. Vote411 (VOTE411.org) will go live on October 5th.

The online VOTE411 *Voter Guide* will be available for all races for all counties in NM. Additionally, the four local Leagues will each print *Voter Guides* for some or all the counties they serve in time for early voting. The state League (LWVNM) is responsible for 23 counties not covered by the local Leagues. The local Leagues are responsible for the following counties:

- 1) LWV of Central New Mexico – Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, & Valencia counties
- 2) LWV of Los Alamos – Los Alamos County
- 3) LWV of Santa Fe County – Santa Fe County
- 4) LWV of Southern NM – Dona Ana, Grant, Otero, Luna, Sierra.

The mid-term election will be very consequential. As a result, the local Leagues need your help to ensure voters go to the polls and that they know where candidates stand on issues. If you can help your local League with any small part of the following activities, it would be most welcome and appreciated:

- Join your local League Voter Services Committee;
- Conduct online research to find corrected candidate contact information;
- Call non-responding candidates using a provided script;
- Help distribute *Voter Guides* at community centers, senior centers, libraries, and other designated places;
- Assist with poll watching;
- Assist with voter registration activities: staff voter registration tables, distribute League brochures, etc.;
- Assist your local League with candidate forums: needed are time-keepers, question writers, speak our local League, write Op-Eds on various subjects related to the election;

- Help the Membership Chair get young people involved.
- Assist the Communications Chair to advertise VOTE411, the election, the League;
- So many things to do so little time! We need your help!

Important Election Dates

Tue., Oct 6: First day of Early Voting; first day absentee ballots are mailed;

Sat., Oct. 17: First day of expanded Early Voting

Tue., Oct 20: Last day to request an absentee ballot

Sat, Oct 31: Last day of Early Voting

Tue, Nov 3: Election Day! Polls are open 7am - 7pm

Nuclear Issues Report

By Karen M. Douglas, Nuclear Issues Chair

DOE Initiative for Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses

A Collaboration Council meeting on June 1 featured discussion of the DOE's state- and Tribe-led Request for Information for Nuclear Lifecycle Innovation Campuses, which will co-locate nuclear waste storage with new innovation technologies.

Twenty-six states have submitted proposals in response to the 2026 DOE Request for Information, with five already committed. The goal is to finalize agreements by summer in order to influence nuclear waste policy before the next Congress.

The Nuclear Lifestyle Innovation Campus may have operating nuclear plants with fuel handling facilities, or with storage options. There are also options considering recycling, mining, advanced reactors or to co-locating repositories in the state, including deep geological disposal and broader nuclear technologies, e.g., small modular reactors or micro reactors or new fuel fabrication facilities.

The conversation also covered the Defense Production Act's (DPA) role in advancing nuclear fuel cycle solutions, workforce development, and the potential for advanced reactors to reduce nuclear waste. Nuclear industry progress would be streamlined under the DPA, which was originally enacted during the 1950s. The DPA allows government to work with industry without violating anti-competition rules, enabling a diverse set of stakeholders to consider a particular national security problem, in this case the nuclear fuel cycle, and come up with solutions that satisfy both industry and stakeholders. The impact of DPA application broadly relabels many DOE initiatives as security-related, which both expedites projects and relieves these ventures from prior restrictions, which may include public involvement or regulatory pressures.

A Visit to the New Mexico Wildlife Center

By Barbara Calef, LWVNM 2nd Vice President



Red-eared slider. Photo by Debbie Helper



Kestrel. Photo by Barbara Calef.

Did you know that LWVNM has a position on wildlife? It says, “The League supports the conservation and protection of wildlife and their habitats for the contribution they make toward the health and sustainability of the environment.” When Hannah was tabling at the Roundhouse on League Day, she was approached by Brigette Buynak, lobbyist for the Wildlife Center NM Wildlife Center. Subsequently Matthew Miller, the Executive Director of the Wildlife Center, offered to host a dozen League members for a site visit and presentation.

The Wildlife Center was founded in 1986 by veterinarian Kathleen Ramsey. It moved to its current location in Española in 2005. The goal is to rehabilitate the animals that come into the center and release them into the wild. However, some stay at the center because they’ve lost their fear of humans or are otherwise unable to survive on their own. In addition to the wildlife hospital, the facility has native wildlife displays, and an educational focus. It is currently expanding, with plans to construct a flight arena and a new hospital building.



Red-tailed hawk, Photo by Debbie Helper

Four League members accepted the offer and enjoyed the presentation and tour of the facilities, especially the opportunity to meet some of the residents. The Wildlife Center is located at 19 Wheat St. in Española. It’s open for visitors Tuesday-Sunday 9-4. Animals Encounters programs take place Tuesday to Sunday at 11:30 a.m. The phone number is (505) 753-9505.

Local League News

Los Alamos

by Leslie Wallstrom, President

Accomplishments:

Membership – Currently 125 members.

Voter Guide publication – Our County Voter Guide with candidate position statements was distributed to every household in the County on April 30, 2026, in preparation for the June 2nd primary. Copies were also distributed to the two libraries, the various polling stations, the Senior Center, etc. Approximately 9,700 copies were distributed. Numerous citizens have expressed appreciation for the Voter Guide as they head to the polls.

Public events – A well-attended candidate forum was held on April 30, 2026. The candidates for County Council

and for Sheriff presented their platforms and answered questions. The League sponsored tables at the Health Forum at the Senior Center and at the Chamber of Commerce “Chamberfest” in early May. Both events offered opportunities to engage with voters and potential new members.

Lunch with a Leader –At this event speakers discuss their area of expertise while League members and guests enjoy their lunch. In March Representative Christine Chandler, who is a former County Councilor, spoke about the role of the County Council. In May Marcela Diaz, the Executive Director of *Somos Un Pueblo Unido* spoke. June speaker: Elias Isaacson, who is the Community Development Dept. Director from Los Alamos County. At each session approximately 30 League members and guests attended.

National Convention – I attended the LWV National Convention from June 23rd to June 28th in Columbus, Ohio - the only delegate from Los Alamos. This was inspiring and educational, as the National office continues to fight for our constitutional democracy and voters’ rights.

Local Study – The LWVLA is conducting a study regarding turning garbage into synthetic gas for energy purposes. A company called Mozart Devco is designing a plant and intends to operate it on land owned by a local pueblo. Barbara Calef oversees this study, and the group has met several times to learn from various professionals involved with this project.

County Council Observers – League members continue to monitor the local County Council meetings and write up summaries for our newsletter. These are also published in one of the two local online newspapers (*Los Alamos Reporter*). These succinct summaries provide a way for many people to track the issues and votes in the County Council and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings.

Major Problem – Our Board member names and email addresses were used in an attempted scam to embezzle members. Unfortunately, one off-Board director fell for the scam and lost over \$2,000! Be warned – this could happen to your League Board/Members. The scammers are relentless in their pursuit of vulnerable people.

Santa Fe County

By Judy Gibbs Robinson, Director/Media

- Our new Membership co-chairs, Randi Lowenthal and Jessie Ryker Crawford, are planning a new-member event this fall to welcome new members and orient them to volunteer opportunities.
- Our board meetings have moved to the third Wednesday of the month, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., at Friends Meeting, 505 Camino De Los Marquez, to accommodate board members with daytime jobs.
- PR/Communications Director Stephanie Schlanger wrote, and the board in July approved, a new policy outlining the process for requesting grants/funding for projects.
- Our Civil Discourse project, inaugurated a year ago, is expanding to include workshops for the public at local libraries thanks to new member Carolyn Ford.
- Our Voter Services team, led by Kelly Davis and Susan Pfeifer, will resume tabling in late August to register voters and provide voter information; Voter Service is also organizing two candidate forums in September for contested House districts 48 and 50.
- Action & Advocacy held a public presentation July 2 on the proposed ROCK Shelter in Santa Fe.
- Board members Stephanie Schlanger and Kelly Davis were interviewed about voting and elections for the Indivisible Santa Fe Radio podcast. The recording is here: <https://rss.com/podcasts/indivisible-santa-fe-radio>
- We continue to grow our social media audience (Facebook, Instagram and BlueSky) with regular posts and shares. Posts are already scheduled to begin in September promoting Vote411 and other election information.

Southern New Mexico

By Liz Rodriguez-Johnson, President

Voter Services

Our Voter Services Committee is meeting regularly. We are currently preparing the RFP for the printed Voter Guide and planning for the distribution of Voter Guides once they are printed. We have a subcommittee that is planning our candidate forums, including several forums that will be held with our local PBS station. Two of our members are attending the state VS meetings. The VS Committee Chair has mastered Vote411 and will be able to upload and track candidate questions and responses.

These Op-Eds were published in the *Las Cruces Bulletin* in 2026:

- *Voting from home improves NM voter access* (April 30 posted online and in print edition)
- *Semi-open primaries allow broader NM voter participation* (April 9 posted online and in print edition)
- *Priorities for legislative action* (January 23 posted online and in print edition)

The member who wrote these Op-Eds is planning on writing several more in the coming months.

GOTV Activities

In 2020 Doña Ana County had the largest voter turnout in recorded history. Because of the COVID crises everyone in New Mexico was allowed to use absentee ballots. This was particularly convenient for voters who found it difficult to schedule voting time or find transportation. In 2023, the legislature passed the New Mexico Voting Rights Act, which created a voluntary permanent absentee voter list. However, we have found that few people are aware of this law and therefore don't take advantage of it. Depending on the amount of funds raised, the LWVSNM will launch a social media and billboard campaign in order to make eligible voters in Doña Ana County aware that they can vote via absentee ballot ("vote at home") and to encourage them to do so. Our President is working with a Government Professor at NMSU to help us document the success of this initiative.

Updated Public Library Position

At the annual meeting in April, the updated position on public libraries was affirmed by the membership. The position now applies to public libraries in general rather than being limited to the Branigan Memorial Library. In addition, the position notes that public libraries play an important role in facilitating free and open access to information, supporting the citizens' right to know, supporting civic education and media literacy, and serving as safe spaces. Libraries must also keep pace with growing multicultural, multilingual community needs and receive appropriate government support.

The update of the position is timely in that the city ballot may include a GO bond issue supporting renovation and expansion of Branigan Library. Several members of the SNM library committee are working with the Friends of Branigan Memorial Library on an education campaign to be launched if this item is added to the ballot.

Healthcare Committee

The LWVSNM Healthcare Committee will lead a statewide study of the impact of medical malpractice on access to healthcare in New Mexico. The study kicked off with a July 9th webinar presented at the monthly educational meeting of the Central New Mexico League. The recording of this webinar can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mvDjEq-mOk>

Thirty-eight virtual participants attended the webinar, many from the three other local Leagues, and 18-20 in-person CNM members. So far eight participants have expressed interest in participating in the study. Next steps

include:

- Assess the expertise of participants who expressed interest in the study.
- Define the scope of the study.
- Query state League officials about sending out information to all League members.

Donations

With encouragement from life member Chris Little, we participated in the Southern New Mexico Giving Day in late April and received \$640 in donations (one of which was from someone other than a member). This qualified us for matching funds of \$500 from the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico, the Gila Foundation, and the Southwest New Mexico United Way.

Membership

In June we held a Social/New Member Welcome that was attended by 28 members, four of whom had joined LWVSNM in the past few months. Several members brought guests who were given information about joining and received follow-up welcoming messages. Membership renewals have been steady, and we currently have 106 members. About 90% of our members do choose to renew.

Central New Mexico

By Starlyn Brown, President

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting was held May 9th. Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller was our speaker. We have three new board members, and one board member who changed from Vice President of Membership to Civics Education Director. Dina Hennessy is our new Vice President of Membership. Kit Rosewater is our new Outreach Director. Jen Pecasting is our new Special Projects Director. Liz Shields is our new Civic Education Director.

OpEd

The Albuquerque Journal published our OpEd on the Primary election and where to find information on May 24th.

Primary Election

The overall candidate response rates showed significant improvement across the board. This was due in great part to the efforts of our volunteer callers and our team who assisted candidates who had trouble utilizing the VOTE411 portal.

Bernalillo/Sandoval 86%

Torrance/Valencia 78%

Membership

Nine new members have joined in the last two months.

Voter Services/Outreach

We continue to be very busy tabling at events. We have had multiple opportunities to engage with underrepresented communities. Healthcare for the Homeless, Roadrunner Food Bank and Pantry, Transgender Resource Center,

Rio Rancho Pride, and Naturalization ceremonies are some examples. We are continuing our efforts to have more of a presence in Sandoval, Torrance and Valencia counties. To that end, we are tabling at the Valencia County Fair in August.

We recently met with the Center for Democracy and Civic Education (CDCE) to discuss partnerships and collaboration. This is the group that is involved in the We The People program in public schools. Now they would like to expand civic education further and include 1-12th grades. They intend to operate statewide.

Data Center and Microgrid Study

The study committee has started their work with gusto! The study has three areas of focus – Environment, Electricity/Microgrid, and Economic Development.

Forums

We are being asked to participate in more candidate forums. We are actively recruiting and training new volunteers to meet the needs. Our next forum will be in Los Lunas on August 8th.

LWV Convention

I attended the LWV Convention in Columbus, Ohio. There isn't anything quite like being in room with hundreds of intelligent, stubborn and motivated people.

Membership Meetings

We continue to have Drop in Coffee, Happy Hours, and Book Club.

Our June education meeting topic was – Affordable Housing, Beyond the Unhoused (One Year Later).

Our July education meeting topic was - The Impact of Medical Malpractice on Access to Healthcare in New Mexico. All New Mexico League members were invited to attend.

Links to the recordings can be found on our website at <https://www.lwvcnm.org/zoom-meeting-recordings/>

If you are on Facebook, please make it a point to visit our state Facebook page to like and share our posts.



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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.