

Los Alamos Voter Guide 2020

Featuring:

**Voting Information
Candidates**

**Constitutional Amendments
General Obligation Bonds**

Prepared by

LWW

**The League of
Women Voters
of Los Alamos**

LVW of Los Alamos
is grateful to the

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(American Association of University Women)
for their support

Voter Guide to the 2020 General Election

Prepared by the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos and the League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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

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

Essential Dates

Tuesday, October 6: Voter registration closes. Applications must be received by 5 pm at the County Clerk's office in the Los Alamos County Municipal Building; or on-line through the NM Secretary of State Portal (NMVote.org) by 11:59 p.m.

Tuesday, October 6 – Saturday, October 31: Same day in-person voter registration begins. Must be done in person at the Los Alamos County Clerk's office during regular hours.

Tuesday, October 6: Absentee Voting by mail begins. Most registered voters will receive an absentee ballot application in the mail this year, or, preferably, you can go to www.nmvote.org now to request an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots will be mailed out beginning on October 6. Fill them out and return them right away. The last day to request an absentee ballot is October 20.

Tuesday, October 6 – Friday, October 16: Early Voting in person begins:

Los Alamos County Municipal Building
Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 17 – Saturday, October 31: Early Voting in person continues:

Los Alamos County Municipal Building - Council Chambers
White Rock Town Hall – Training Rooms
Monday - Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Monday, November 2 - Voting is CLOSED

Tuesday, November 3: General Election Day. Vote Centers are open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Registered voters of Los Alamos County may vote at **any** of the following Vote Centers on Election Day:

Los Alamos County Municipal Building - Council Chambers

White Rock Town Hall – Training Rooms

Golf Course Community Building – Multi-Purpose Room

All Absentee ballots are physically due back to the County Clerk's Office no later than 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3. You can send your ballot back through the mail, OR you can use the County Clerk's drive-thru ballot drop at the Los Alamos County Municipal Building October 12 through November 3 during voting hours.

Voting Information

You must be registered to vote by October 6 (October 31 if using same-day in-person registration) in order to vote in this election. If you have moved or changed your address or your party affiliation, you should re-register to vote. The County Clerk's office is in the LA County Municipal Building at 1000 Central Ave, Suite 240, 505-662-8010. Application may be made in person, by mail, or online.

For same-day in-person registration only, the applicant must appear in person at the County Clerk's office, and immediately before voting shall provide:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sample ballots will be available at the County Clerk's office, at the Mesa Public Library book drive-thru, and online at www.losalamosnm.us/clerk or www.NMVote.org.

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

Information Online

The LWVLA Voters Guide 2020 is available at www.lwvlosalamos.org. You can also visit the website vote411.org for an interactive look at your ballot and all the candidates. The candidates answered more questions on VOTE411.org than we have printed here in this Voter Guide, so be sure to visit the website and look at your ballot and the candidates' answers.

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

Candidates' Responses to Questions from the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico and the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos sent questionnaires to all New Mexico candidates for the 2020 General Election, and all candidates are reported here.

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

In this Voter Guide, candidates are listed in ballot order. Candidate order within each office was determined on March 30, 2020 by a public alphabet randomization.

Thanks

We would like to thank the League of Women Voters of New Mexico Voter Guide Editor Diane Goldfarb. The editor of the Los Alamos Voter Guide is Lynn Jones, with the help of JoAnn Lysne, Akkana Peck, Barbara Calef, Rosmarie Frederickson, and AAUW member Judy Prono. Thank you also to the United States League of Women Voters for the support of our on-line Voter Guide at VOTE411.org.

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

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President and Vice President of the United States

President of the United States is the head of state and head of government of the United States of America. The president directs the executive branch of the federal government and is the commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces. The vice president is the second-highest officer in the executive branch and ranks first in the presidential line of succession. The vice president is also an officer in the legislative branch, as president of the Senate.

Howie Hawkins and Angela Nicole Walker
(Green)

Jo Jorgensen and Jeremy “Spike” Cohen
(Libertarian)

Joseph R. Biden and Kamala D. Harris
(Democrat)

Sheila “Samm” Tittle and David Carl Sandige
(Constitution)

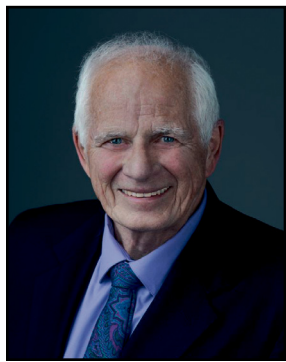
Donald J. Trump and Mike Pence
(Republican)

Gloria La Riva and Sunil Freeman
(Party for Socialism and Liberation)

Jade Simmons
(No Party Affiliation)

United States Senator

Candidates must be at least 30 years old, a citizen of the United States at least 9 years, and a resident of the state from which elected. The United States Senate has 100 members. Two United States Senators are elected to six-year staggered terms by the entire state. One New Mexico Senate seat is up for election this year.



Bob Walsh
(Libertarian)

1. Should Congress act to mitigate the effects of climate change? If so, how? If not, why not?

Congress should defund government departments that fail to report emissions produced and measures taken to reduce emissions. Individuals may take whatever voluntary measures they deem appropriate. Congress should not impose burdens on the private sector to mitigate uncertain effects that are decades away. Instead, Congress should let our economy grow while the

technology advances.

2. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding the accessibility, affordability, and quality of health care?

Libertarians favor a free market. We should be free to determine our level of health insurance, our level of health care, our providers, our medicines and treatments, and our end-of-life choices. We should be free to purchase insurance and care across state lines. A free market would offer many choices, including competing affordable options with only catastrophic insurance and without the latest interventions. Independent individuals and groups would rate quality.

3. Is voter suppression an issue that needs to be addressed by Congress? Please explain.

Voting rights are protected under Amendments IV, XV, XIX, and XXIV. Congress must provide adequate funding to the Justice Department to investigate and prosecute any infringement of these rights.

4. What action, if any, should Congress take to relieve the United States Postal

Service of its financial distress?

Now that we can communicate by telephone, by email, and by text messaging, the postal service is no longer essential. Congress should stop protecting the USPS from competition. It should ease the financial burden by assuming responsibility for its existing pension obligations, which are unfunded largely because Congress has been micromanaging the system. Then the system should be sold, with the proceeds used to help fund the pension obligations.



Mark V. Ronchetti
(Republican)

1. Should Congress act to mitigate the effects of climate change? If so, how? If not, why not?

While climate change should be addressed, I disagree with those who believe that dismantling our economy is the answer. I strongly oppose the Green New Deal that my opponent is co-sponsoring. The “Green New Deal” would destroy our economy, while the world’s largest polluters - India & China - sit idly by. The approach of proponents of the Green New Deal simply won’t work. I support an innovative approach relying on natural gas, carbon capture & emerging technologies to address climate change.

2. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding the accessibility, affordability, and quality of health care?

Increasing and improving access to healthcare is possible by enacting policies that lower costs while protecting quality and choice. I oppose government-run Medicare for All. I will always protect coverage for those who have pre-existing conditions. In a state like New Mexico, wider availability of telemedicine is critical to accomplishing this goal. Every American should be able to pick the healthcare plan and doctor they want, not one the government picks for them.

3. Is voter suppression an issue that needs to be addressed by Congress? Please explain.

Congress should always be monitoring election security and defending free and fair elections. It is important that every American citizen has the ability to vote so their voice can be heard and shape their government. I support early voting, absentee mail voting, and satellite voting locations. Unlike my opponent, I support voter ID laws to prevent voter fraud.

4. What action, if any, should Congress take to relieve the United States Postal Service of its financial distress?

Congress should ensure the Postal Service has the ability to function going into the election. Additionally, Congress should support the recent agreement in principle between Treasury and USPS for \$10 billion in additional funding from the CARES Act, to guarantee the Postal Service can function without experiencing delays.



Ben R. Lujan
(Democrat)

1. Should Congress act to mitigate the effects of climate change? If so, how? If not, why not?

We cannot wait another generation to act on the climate crisis. In Congress, I introduced the Clean Energy Standard Act to transition electrical utilities to 100% clean energy in the 2050s and authored the IMPACT For Energy Act to expand investments in organizations working to protect our public lands and strengthen regulations to protect our air and water. By making smart

investments in clean energy now, we can create good-paying jobs and secure the needed changes to protect our environment.

2. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding the accessibility, affordability, and quality of health care?

Health care is a human right and that's why I have fought to expand health care throughout my career. I am the author of the State Public Option Act, which allows people to buy into their state's Medicaid programs. In Congress, I voted for legislation to drive down prescription drug prices and end surprise medical billing, all while fighting for resources to improve the quality and accessibility of health care for rural New Mexicans.

3. Is voter suppression an issue that needs to be addressed by Congress? Please explain.

Voter suppression must absolutely be addressed by Congress, which has an obligation to protect the rights of the American people. Voter suppression is a threat to our democracy. In Congress I supported the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore the Voting Rights Act that was struck down by the Supreme Court. I also introduced the Native American Voting Rights Act, to create safeguards for Native American voters to eliminate obstacles to the ballot box faced by Native American voters.

4. What action, if any, should Congress take to relieve the United States Postal Service of its financial distress?

Congress must protect the Postal Service and the absolutely essential role it plays in our communities, including making sure New Mexicans can receive their medications and vote safely during the pandemic. I voted for legislation that would provide the Postal Service with funding to help its financial situation during the course of the pandemic. I also voted for the USPS Fairness Act, which would get rid of requirements that USPS prefund benefits, a major source of the USPS's financial troubles.

United States House of Representative, District 3

Candidates must be at least 25 years old, a United States citizen for at least 7 years, and a resident of New Mexico. The United States House of Representatives has 435 members of which New Mexico is entitled to 3. They serve two-year terms. District 3 includes Los Alamos, Santa Fe, and most of the northern part of the state.



Alexis M. Johnson
(Republican)

1. Should Congress act to mitigate the effects of climate change? If so, how? If not, why not?

As an environmental engineer, I have made sure we respect our environment while creating jobs for New Mexicans and working together. We do not want to have rolling blackouts here in NM as we see in CA due to their all sustainable push. I support sustainable efforts in NM; however, the sun does not always shine, and the wind does not always blow. It

would be foolhardy to put NMs out of jobs, increase their electric bills, and take away 39% of our state revenue for our education. NM together!

2. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding the accessibility, affordability, and quality of health care?

I 100% support coverage for pre-existing conditions. I support choice of doctors and transparency of the cost of services. I will further current efforts to reduce our prescription healthcare costs by bringing in increased competition. I will continue the efforts to hold those accountable for price gouging for life saving medications. In addition, I fully support the expansion of broadband access to facilitate the growth of Telehealth services in our tribal communities and greater NM.

3. Is voter suppression an issue that needs to be addressed by Congress? Please explain.

Our tribal communities need to have access to voting. It is imperative that all voices in New Mexico are heard. In Congress, I will make sure that all communities, irrespective of locale, have access to voting. In Congress, I will promote the voices that are not being heard here in NM not only in our tribal communities but all of NM.

4. What action, if any, should Congress take to relieve the United States Postal Service of its financial distress?

I support a revamping of the USPS and funding to provide for modernization to reduce costs and become more efficient. USPS is crucial to many New Mexicans and I look forward to bringing industry leaders and work together to promote the USPS.



Teresa Leger Fernandez
(Democrat)

1. Should Congress act to mitigate the effects of climate change? If so, how? If not, why not?

In New Mexico, we know how important the land, clean skies and water are to who we are as a people. Yes, Congress must immediately act on climate change. We must rejoin the Paris Agreement, invest in renewable energy resources like wind and solar, utilize regenerative agriculture and pass clean energy tax incentives. Our

transition away from fossil fuels must include economic assistance to places like New Mexico that have borne the brunt of our fossil fuel consumption.

2. What actions, if any, should Congress take regarding the accessibility, affordability, and quality of health care?

It's up to Congress to transition America to universal healthcare, which would ensure quality, affordable access to healthcare for all without bankrupting co-pays and deductibles. Congress must also address discrimination based on preexisting conditions, and bring down the cost of prescription drugs through negotiation, patent reform and increased US manufacturing. Additionally, we must fund our rural clinics and pay our rural doctors, nurses and health workers more.

3. Is voter suppression an issue that needs to be addressed by Congress? Please explain.

It's shameful that President Trump and some Republicans want to suppress the vote and undermine democracy. I've spent my career fighting for voting rights, and when I get to Congress I will push for the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the We the People Act to reform our electoral system, increase transparency of campaign finance, allow mail in voting, and prevent states from enacting policies that make it harder, rather than easier, for minorities and working communities to vote.

4. What action, if any, should Congress take to relieve the United States Postal Service of its financial distress?

In August, the House passed legislation to provide \$25 billion to the U.S. Postal Service and halt operational changes that have impacted mail service nationwide. The Senate should take up this bill immediately. Communities in New Mexico and across the country rely on the USPS for essential needs like medicine, bill payments, and other critical communication. It is a service we must protect.



New Mexico Senate, District 5

There are 42 members in the New Mexico Senate. All seats will be filled in the 2020 General Election. Senators are elected for four-year terms. Los Alamos is split into two Senate Districts. Senate District 5 includes Los Alamos townsite. Senate District 6 includes White Rock.



Lee G. Weinland
(Libertarian)

1. Racial and income inequalities have become important social and economic issues. What actions should the legislature take to address and resolve these issues?

I support better legislation to prevent racial and socioeconomic discrimination.

2. What are your major concerns regarding education in New Mexico and how can they be addressed?

We are 49th in the nation for achievement of our students. This is unacceptable. The fact that a large majority of our students reach high school with reading delays of in abilities is indicative of the system allowing them to pass through without real assessment or help is not good. I propose a state wide program that addresses children's reading issues in first and second grade and brings them up to level then. An excellent example is the Manzano Mesa Elementary school's reading program.

3. What action, if any, should be taken at the state level to reduce our use of fossil fuels and encourage the use of clean energy?

We have more sunshine than almost any other state. WE also have more vacant desert land sitting right under that sun. Let's build massive fields of solar and wind energy generators. Let's invest in miles and miles of energy generation, so much so that we can sell energy to other states. We will eventually run out of fossil fuels and have to do this any way so why not start today to prepare for the future.

4. How can New Mexico increase access to broadband internet? Should there be a minimum standard of internet access throughout the state, and how can we achieve that?

This is easy to solve with technology and money. there is no excuse in the future for not investing in and providing the best quality internet and networks available.



Leo Jaramillo
(Democrat)

1. Racial and income inequalities have become important social and economic issues. What actions should the legislature take to address and resolve these issues?

The income gap between New Mexico's richest and poorest households is the widest in the nation. Underlying extreme inequality in New Mexico are serious problems in the state's job market. Lawmakers need to enact policies

that will narrow the income gap—such as raising the state's minimum wage and indexing it to rise with inflation and restoring unemployment insurance benefits. Fully implementing the Affordable Care Act—including the Medicaid expansion—will create much-needed jobs.

2. What are your major concerns regarding education in New Mexico and how can they be addressed?

The state budget is stretched thin in meeting our constitutional requirements and it is important to diversify revenues into the General Fund. Lawmakers must enact policies that will support diversification of our economy. The tax cuts for higher income earners have starved our state of vitally needed revenues for essential services and the budget has been balanced on the backs of our public schools. I support school funding to be distributed through the SEG formula.

3. What action, if any, should be taken at the state level to reduce our use of fossil fuels and encourage the use of clean energy?

Stopping methane flaring and methane leaks would be a good place to start. With regard to coal powered power plants, they should be phased out as our share of renewable energy grows. In the meantime, they should be regulated to reduce emissions with installation of filters that trap CO2 emissions. Additionally, we must accelerate a transition to a clean energy economy by investing in energy efficient technologies and expanding the use of renewable energy.

4. How can New Mexico increase access to broadband internet? Should there be a minimum standard of internet access throughout the state, and how can we achieve that?

New Mexico lacks coordination and oversight of broadband development efforts, with responsibilities spread among the Public Regulation Commission and state departments for public education, transportation, information technology and other agencies. Unlike New Mexico, model states with high rates of broadband access have a lead agency established in law with a director appointed by the Governor in charge of tracking the money and ensure accountability.



Diamantina Prado Storment
(Republican)

1. Racial and income inequalities have become important social and economic issues. What actions should the legislature take to address and resolve these issues?

Coming from a poor family I was taught that All Americans have the right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness equally and with hard work you can achieve your dreams.

There is no true resolve to these issues, but I do believe that the legislature could pass sensible laws to help address some of the issues we are facing today.

2. What are your major concerns regarding education in New Mexico and how can they be addressed?

Children of big cities and small villages are entitled to receive the same quality education, but at this time they do not. All teachers should be required to have certifications; receive higher pay and smaller classes. They should be given up to date tools and supplies to challenge the students to excel with today's advanced technology. I strongly support more money spent directly in the classroom on the children's needs than on office leadership.

3. What action, if any, should be taken at the state level to reduce our use of fossil fuels and encourage the use of clean energy?

At this time, I have no opinion. Fossil fuels are the life blood of this state's revenue. There needs to be a comprehensive study performed on the conversion cost of moving away from fossil fuels to green energy, the return on Investment of Green Energy, and deployment cost of Green Energy. I feel that the Green Energy cost are too prohibitive at this time.

4. How can New Mexico increase access to broadband internet? Should there be a minimum standard of internet access throughout the state, and how can we achieve that?

In 2008 New Mexico had the opportunity through the American Rehabilitation and Recovery Act to upgrade and expand these needed services, but failed. Today, New Mexico should look at tax incentives to entice communication carries to better the rural parts of New Mexico by upgrading and expanding the infrastructure while enticing competition between carriers allowing for a reduction in cost for the end user.



New Mexico Senate, District 6

There are 42 members in the New Mexico Senate. All seats will be filled in the 2020 General Election. Senators are elected for four-year terms. Los Alamos is split into two Senate Districts. Senate District 5 includes Los Alamos townsite. Senate District 6 includes White Rock.

Roberto 'Bobby' Gonzales
(Democrat)
NO RESPONSE RECEIVED

N.M. House of Representatives, District 43

There are 70 members of the N.M. House of Representatives. All seats will be filled in the 2020 General Election. Representatives are elected for two-year terms. District 43 includes Los Alamos and parts of Sandoval and Santa Fe Counties.



Christine Chandler
(Democrat)

1. Racial and income inequalities have become important social and economic issues. What actions should the legislature take to address and resolve these issues?

This challenge must be approached on many different fronts: minority and rural populations must receive educational opportunities equal to their peers in more affluent areas, including narrowing the technology gap; new criminal justice strategies that include police reforms; limited reliance on incarceration, and expanded diversion and alternative

sentencing programs; social welfare, behavioral health and drug treatment initiatives; and support for families through paid family leave and childcare.

2. What are your major concerns regarding education in New Mexico and how can they be addressed?

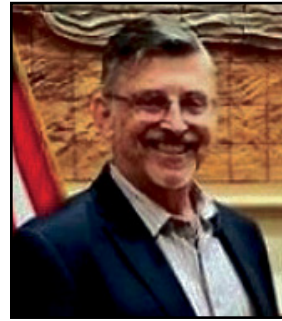
For a variety of social and economic reasons, too many New Mexico children begin their educational experience without the foundation necessary for them to succeed. To support these children, the State must continue to advance Pre-K and early childhood programs that have been shown to promote not only student success in school but also life outcomes.

3. What action, if any, should be taken at the state level to reduce our use of fossil fuels and encourage the use of clean energy?

The Energy Transition Act is a guide for initiatives that shift from fossil fuels to cleaner energy alternatives. The law sets strong renewable energy goals and establishes a pathway for a low-carbon energy transition away from coal while providing workforce training and transition assistance to affected communities. We must continue to be creative, looking for solutions that capitalize on our solar and wind capabilities, while at the same time supporting worker transition with vocational training.

4. How can New Mexico increase access to broadband internet? Should there be a minimum standard of internet access throughout the state, and how can we achieve that?

State-wide access to internet service that meets a minimum service standard must be achieved not in the long-term but in the short-term. The responsibility for overseeing and championing internet services is spread out among too many entities. With so many diffuse pieces, it is difficult to implement a cohesive strategy. Without one responsible organization, the state will continue to move in ever too slow incremental steps.



David E. Hampton
(Republican)

1. Racial and income inequalities have become important social and economic issues. What actions should the legislature take to address and resolve these issues?

The same actions we need to take to achieve a more stable economy, such as tax reform, improved education, and reduced crime, will help address and resolve racial and income inequalities. We need to enforce current legislation which supports equal opportunity and ensure

that all New Mexicans have equal access to the opportunities that a stable and prosperous economy would provide.

2. What are your major concerns regarding education in New Mexico and how can they be addressed?

Since top-heavy government schools have failed to meet the requirement of providing sufficient education to all students, the Legislature should make educational choice available to parents, and the money allocated to education from the State Budget should follow the student. This would especially help rectify education inequalities like those we see in the Navajo Nation and in lower income communities.

3. What action, if any, should be taken at the state level to reduce our use of fossil fuels and encourage the use of clean energy?

At this time, I do not support any actions at the state level to reduce our use of fossil fuels. Wind, solar, and the other renewable options do not seem to be effective and produce additional environmental problems in regards to production and disposal. In addition, at a time when 41% of New Mexico's budget is funded by severance taxes generated from fossil fuel extraction in our state, transitioning from fossil fuel use seems unwise.

4. How can New Mexico increase access to broadband internet? Should there be a minimum standard of internet access throughout the state, and how can we achieve that?

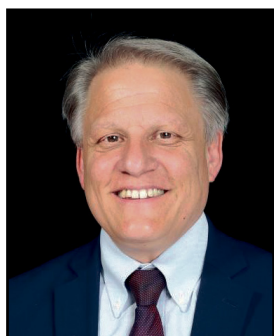
One way is to apply for USDA grants. Another way, and certainly the one the state legislature could accomplish most easily, would be to encourage infrastructure development by exempting it from gross receipts tax. Eliminating taxation would make it profitable for providers to build the infrastructure in many areas. I do not support establishing a state minimum standard. Established state standards, as we see with education, referencing the Yazzie/Martinez case, can be ignored by the state.

Justice of the Supreme Court

The five Supreme Court justices are elected by all voters in the state and serve eight-year terms. To be eligible to hold the office of Justice of the Supreme Court, a person must be 35 years old, have practiced law for at least 10 years, and have resided in New Mexico for the last 3 years. The Supreme Court serves as the administrative head of the New Mexico judicial branch of government. It is the "court of last resort" for state appellate actions, regulates attorneys and judges, and has superintending control over all lower state courts. It has jurisdiction over civil cases where jurisdiction is not specifically vested in the state Court of Appeals, appeals from criminal cases imposing the death penalty or life imprisonment, appeals from decisions of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, certiorari review of state Court of Appeals decisions, and cases certified to it by the state Court of Appeals or any federal court.

VOTE AMERICA
EVERY VOTE COUNTS

Supreme Court Justice, Position 1



Ned S. Fuller
(Republican)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on the court?

I am a deputy district attorney in San Juan County, NM. I have served as an administrative law judge, district court judge, as the NM Worker's Compensation Director, Acting Cabinet Secretary for the NM General Services Department and overseen the litigation involving the State. I have served in private practice handling a wide variety of civil matters.

What most qualifies me to serve however is my philosophy and commitment that a judge must uphold the Constitution and follow the law.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

Not yet. There are a number of organizations that provide access to legal help. See for example: <https://www.nmbar.org/NmbarDocs/forPublic/LegalServiceProviders.pdf> I support efforts to streamline the adjudication process through arbitration, mediation, and summary trials. As NM Workers' Compensation Director I worked to make the system accessible to our rural communities through video conferencing, weekly lump sum settlement hearings and online mediation scheduling.

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

Regarding criminal law we can do better in balancing the rights of the accused and the safety of our community. I support pre-trial detention rules that combine dangerousness hearings and preliminary hearings and allow the same rules of evidence for both. I would make the time constraints consistent with the complexity of the case. Our system is too expensive and there are too many delays. I support alternative dispute resolutions such as arbitration, mediation and summary jury trials.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

Yes, but I would rather have a system allowing the executive to appoint with retention votes to follow. This approach better meets the goal of an independent judiciary that is also accountable to the public it serves. Whether partisan or non-partisan, elections politicize our judiciary by requiring judges to campaign. We should study whether our justices should be selected one each from five different geographical regions of the State. Currently all five justices come from Santa Fe or ABQ.



Shannon Bacon
(Democrat)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on the court?

I have been serving New Mexico as a judge for over a decade. Prior to my appointment to the New Mexico Supreme Court, I was a district court judge. This experience, trying cases, managing a very large docket and working on the administration of justice gives me a solid foundation for the work of the Supreme Court. I have also dedicated much of my judicial career to equal access to justice. Providing legal

services to New Mexican's who cannot afford a lawyer is critical to the legal system.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

Yes. I believe that all New Mexican's should have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system. I am an active member of the Access to Justice

Commission and was the Co-Chair of the Second Judicial District's Pro Bono Committee. In these roles I have worked on programs providing free legal services to anyone in need and creating systems that make it easier for people to navigate the court system. I continue this work on the Supreme Court.

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

I support changes that allow cases to be timely decided. Often, by the time a case reaches the Supreme Court, years have passed. Ensuring that once the case reaches the Court it moves toward resolution requires a focus on deciding cases and writing opinions. Recently, I proposed procedural changes to our rules that will allow the Court to address cases more quickly. I also support changes that foster open government, such as the Court's recent decision to telecast our oral argument.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

I do. The judiciary is an independent branch of government that by design is not subject to political winds. Judges are not partisan. Because of the unique role of the judiciary and judges, it would better reflect the courts if judicial elections were nonpartisan.



Supreme Court Justice, Position 2

Kerry J. Morris
(Republican)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on the court?

Having been licensed to practice law for nearly 40 years, I've had the opportunity to represent thousands of individuals, small businesses, insurance companies, state agencies, and many others. My years of experience have

provided me with a broad understanding of a wide variety of areas of legal practice. My years of experience representing people enable me to understand the needs, expectations, and concerns of parties who appear before the court.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

Yes, I do believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and legal system in New Mexico. There are a wide variety of free legal services offered to those of limited means who otherwise would be unable to afford legal representation or have access to the courts. Among the many services available to the poor, in include the public defender's office for qualified criminal defendants and many programs for non-criminal or civil cases.

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

None at the present time.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

I do not favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary because I believe that party affiliation is one important factor among many that may be helpful to the public in evaluating judicial candidates.



David K. Thomson
(Democrat)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on the court?

My legal career and community involvement have uniquely prepared me for this position. I was vetted by a bi-partisan judicial nominating commission and extensively interviewed by the Governor, who appointed

me to the position. As a sitting Justice, and former trial court judge in the 1st judicial district, my experience proved invaluable in ensuring the NM court system remained open during COVID19. I litigated for the NM Attorney General's Office and am familiar with how to run a court system.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

In many rural parts of this state there is a legal desert and legal access gap. To close the gap, I support limited licensing of non-lawyers for simple legal matters. I support increases in technological infrastructure to allow filing by email and remote appearances. I believe if a lawyer provides free legal aid, they should receive a reduction in dues or CLE credit. Finally, we need to create a loan forgiveness program for new lawyers that will serve rural areas.

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

Many changes are required because of the pandemic that will serve our system well afterward. For example, courts broadened access to electronic filing for non represented parties. I led an effort to expand digital access. We must continue to make this process easier, especially for rural communities. During these times of social unrest, we must confront and address our role in resolving racial inequality. That is why I started a minority clerkship program to improve diversity in the judiciary.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

Our system of choosing judges is not perfect. However, voters have the information needed to elect experienced and qualified judges. My experience is well documented. I am the only one in my race who went through a vigorous vetting process with a bipartisan nominating commission and interview process. Voters can read the opinions or articles on the law I have written. As a trial court judge, I was evaluated by the Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission. Documented verified experience counts.

Court of Appeals Judge

The 10 judges on the Court of Appeals are elected statewide and serve 8-year terms. Eligibility requirements: a person must be 35 years old, have practiced law for at least 10 years, and have resided in New Mexico for the last 3 years. As the intermediate appellate court between the district courts and the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals reviews appeals in all cases, except criminal cases involving sentences of death or life imprisonment, appeals from the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, and cases involving habeas corpus. The judges sit in panels of three judges to decide cases.

Court of Appeals Judge, Position 1



Barbara V. Johnson
(Republican)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

I was sworn in as an attorney in October, 1988. I started working immediately in the area of Family Law, which is a very broad area involving the parties' relationships, children, finances, assets, liabilities and at times criminal and other civil matters. Although most of my cases are settled, those that are not are concluded with a trial. If the trial judge decides an issue incorrectly, the next step is to ask the Court of Appeals to change the trial judge's decision, which I have done.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

No. Access to and justice from our legal system is best obtained with the assistance of an educated, trained, experienced professional - a lawyer. Those that cannot

afford a lawyer often represent themselves. We should have more publications available about the various areas of law and more programs making it easier for lawyers to obtain their required credits for representing litigants that cannot afford a lawyer or will represent litigants for a reduced fee.

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

I understand some of the reasons appellate decisions take years to be issued is the difficulty in keeping the attorney clerks that assist the Judges, the Judiciary is not sufficiently funded to hire, train and keep those attorneys, there are insufficient funds for proper training of new Judges and continuing legal education for more experienced Judges. Those budget matters should be examined within the Court of Appeals and addressed to our legislators, so our Judiciary is an equal branch.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

No. Judges elected by the citizens keep the judges accountable to the citizens. Committees should not be reviewing applications and making recommendations to the Governor to fill vacancies. Each step of our current process allows for input by citizens. However, our citizens are mostly unaware of any process but an election. The Judiciary is an equal branch of our government. As such, it should be created by the voters it serves - just like to legislative and executive branches.



Zach Ives
(Democrat)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

My experience as a judge and a lawyer have prepared me well. Over the past year and a half serving on the Court of Appeals, I have gained a great deal of experience doing the difficult work of an appellate judge. Before Governor Lujan Grisham appointed me, I had 17 years of experience as a litigator, handling appeals in federal and state courts and a wide variety of cases in trial courts. I also served as a law clerk to Chief Justice Pamela Minzner of the New Mexico Supreme Court.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

Unfortunately, no. For civil matters, I support the Justice For All Initiative. Its basic goals are to ensure that every person with legal needs can (1) access important components of our system with or without the help of a lawyer and (2) receive appropriate services, such as alternative dispute resolution and representation by a lawyer. For criminal matters, I believe we must adequately fund legal representation for people (defendants and victims) who cannot afford to pay private lawyers.

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

Our court is exploring how to use our limited resources more efficiently because additional funding will be scarce due to the pandemic. For example, I have worked on a pilot project involving potential changes to our calendaring system, which is what we use to determine how difficult each case is and what resources we will need to analyze the case and make a decision. Modifying this system could increase the quality of our decisions and decrease the amount of time it takes to resolve appeals.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

Yes, I believe nonpartisan elections would benefit New Mexicans by increasing the independence of our judiciary. Ultimately, whether to make this change is a question for our Legislature. In the meantime, voters have a neutral source of information about qualifications: bi-partisan judicial nominating commissions. I participated in this rigorous vetting process, which involves a written application and interview by all commissioners. The commission recommended me as a qualified candidate.

Court of Appeals Judge, Position 2



Stephen P. Curtis
(Libertarian)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

I have practiced law in NM since 1978. During this time I have represented clients in hundreds of cases, including approximately 20 appeals in many different areas of law.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

I believe all persons in NM have access to legal assistance, although people and entities who have more wealth do have better access. I suggest that the entire legal process should be streamlined and made to be more efficient and, therefore, less costly.

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

I believe we need more Judges on the Court of Appeals so that cases are decided more expeditiously.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

I do favor non-partisan elections for the judiciary. Party affiliation hinders the process and unnecessarily politicizes the elections. I suggest an open process where anyone who obtains the requisite signatures should be on the ballot.



Shammara H. Henderson
(Democrat)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

I was vetted and recommended by a bi-partisan commission and appointed by the Governor. My experience includes all sides of criminal and civil matters as a former federal and state prosecutor and defense lawyer. My work on civil rights, employment law, and personal injury has afforded me a diverse career. As an Assistant US Attorney under the Obama administration and clerk for Supreme Court Justice Charles Daniels, I

understand how the important work of the courts impact all New Mexicans.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

While NM is fortunate that the courts' staff, judges, and attorneys are more diverse than in other states, we do not have a perfect system. While we have many wonderful programs, many New Mexicans are still falling through the gaps and receiving inconsistent sentencing or punishment when not represented by trained attorneys. Equitable resources across all judicial districts and the formation of specialty courts across the state are critical.

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

Making the court more user-friendly for pro se parties is always a challenge. We have been working on technology changes so that those without attorney-representation have easier access to competently move their cases forward. The Court is also working on ensuring more oral arguments during the pandemic through virtual means. And, each judge has been committed to ending backlog and getting the court a stable caseload as compared to historical norms.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

Integrity and confidence in the election of our judiciary is critical. While judges currently run in partisan elections, we must adhere to a very strict Code of Conduct which prohibits us from being "political" and taking stances on issues. Voters should take great confidence in electing those who went through the bi-partisan nominating process, which I did. It is a rigorous process to ensure only the most qualified judges are appointed and have been deemed qualified.



Gertrude Lee
(Republican)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

For over ten years I have worked as a trial attorney and prosecutor in both State and Tribal court. I worked my way up from an entry-level attorney to a Deputy District Attorney in Gallup where I represented the State in numerous jury trials and filed several appeals. I continue my work as a prosecutor in Farmington. I am also the former Chief Prosecutor of the Navajo Nation where I brought cases before the Tribal Courts, and

managed 10 prosecutor offices and several dozen staff.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

We are living in unprecedented times. As we rely more on technology the issues with access become more apparent and difficult for those in rural communities with unstable housing, limited telephone service, and/or no access to the internet. To this end, I support reforms and projects to improve broadband infrastructure in rural communities to make electronic access more available, thus ensuring that everyone has fair and equal access to the legal system.

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

We have all heard the phrase "justice delayed is justice denied." This is true for parties who wait years for a decision from the Court of Appeals. However, the Court faces a number of challenges, including an increasing docket and limited resources. I would recommend using available data to help identify where the appellate process can be streamlined. Streamlining the process should aim to decrease the time period it takes to calendar a case and decrease the time it takes to decide a case.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

I favor a process of selection based upon merit to be followed by a retention election. The process of selection by merit separates the Judge from partisan politics while ensuring he or she is qualified for the position. I am in favor of retention elections so the people always have a say whether to keep a judge or not.

Court of Appeals Judge, Position 3



Thomas C. Montoya
(Republican)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

I have been qualified to be appointed district judge 3 times by the Judicial Nominating Commission. I have devoted my 39 year career to the field of family law, which covers a very wide variety of all the civil laws which arise in those cases. I have chaired Supreme Court Committees which promulgated statewide rules for family law and domestic violence cases. I have

written, lobbied and obtained sponsors for over 30 statutory enactments in family law to address solutions to family law problems.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

In theory, all persons are equal before the Courts and the law. In practice, many people cannot afford a lawyer, which creates a great disadvantage, even if the opponent also does not have a lawyer. For this reason, the New Mexico Supreme Court should consider mandatory, rather than voluntary, minimum legal services by lawyers to be provided to those who cannot afford a lawyer.

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

The Court of Appeals is a hard working Court, but with a very high caseload and limited resources. To address this problem will require additional personnel and additional funding.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

I do not favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary, because the party affiliation of a candidate is a public record in any event, and because the public has a right to know such party affiliation, as one factor in deciding for whom to vote. Nonetheless, in decision making, under the law, a judge may not permit political affiliation to influence the judge's judgment.



Jane B. Yohalem
(Democrat)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

I have been an appeals lawyer in New Mexico representing people from every corner of the State before our Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. My career began as a civil rights lawyer representing children with disabilities and have represented indigent families in termination of parental rights cases for many years. I have been counsel in over 400 appeals, resulting in more than 100 published decisions advancing the law of New Mexico. I have been found qualified by the Judicial Selection Comm.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

We are not providing all persons in New Mexico fair and equal access to our legal system. Years ago, based on my briefs and arguments, our Supreme Court interpreted New Mexico's Children's Code to require the State to provide services to every New Mexico family whose children are taken into State custody, regardless of background. We need to better fund our hard-pressed legal services and public defender offices so they can meet the need for quality legal representation.

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

I was recently appointed by the Governor to serve on the Court of Appeals. The number one concern has been the speed of decisions in the last few years. I am pleased to report that the Court has eliminated the backlog. I would like to look at the Court's priority system to be sure it is working as intended to effectively prioritize time-sensitive appeals, including those of incarcerated individuals and appeals which affect children.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

I believe that New Mexico has a good mix of an initial partisan election followed by a non-contested retention election. A judge must approach each case on its specific

facts and apply the law fairly to those facts. At the same time, voters have a right to know whether a judge shares their values and their understanding of the role our courts play in our democracy. It is appropriate to have the initial vetting of judicial candidates be by the voters in a partisan election.

Public Regulation Commission, District 3

The Public Regulation Commission is a five-person commission that regulates the utilities, telecommunications and motor carrier industries. It also oversees pipeline and fire safety. A candidate must be a citizen of the United States and reside in the district he/she represents. A candidate must also have at least 10 years of specified professional experience and education in an area regulated by the Commission. Commissioners are elected by district and have four-year staggered terms.



Joseph M. Maestas
(Democrat)

1. What are your qualifications for this position?

I have bachelors and masters degrees in civil engineering. As a lifelong public servant, I served our country as a Federal engineer and regulator for over 30 years working at all levels of Federal government. I served my communities for 14 years as councilman and Mayor for the City of Espanola; and councilman for the City of Santa Fe, all quasi-judicial bodies like the PRC. I'm currently a consulting engineer and licensed to practice engineering in the States of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

2. When evaluating requests for utility rate increases, what factors should be considered to ensure fairness to both the rate payers and the companies involved?

The PRC reviews a utility's cost of service and establishes utility rates necessary to recover those costs. The PRC determines that such costs are reasonable and prudent, including a reasonable return on equity, for the utility to provide adequate, efficient, and reasonable service. The PRC verifies costs with adjustments for known and projected changes whereby recovery of these costs must be equitably shared among different customer classes. By law, utility rates must be just and reasonable.

3. What role, if any, does the PRC have in addressing climate change?

As an engineer, I trust the science that tells us that climate change is a real threat to us now and in the future. Our State is a national leader in addressing climate change through the enactment of the Energy Transition Act (ETA) of 2019 which accelerates our transition to 100% renewable energy. Growing our renewable energy sector will help create new jobs, diversify our economy, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. The PRC is key to the implementation of the ETA and other legislation.

4. What should the PRC do to help ensure access to high quality broadband in underserved areas of the state?

The pandemic exposed the critical need for immediate, expanded, and equitable access to broadband across NM. The PRC must work with the State's congressional delegation and executive and legislative branches to develop a statewide broadband plan. The plan must have adequate, consistent State funding to leverage Federal funding and target underserved areas. The PRC must also increase the \$5M broadband program within the Rural Universal Service Fund. A mix of broadband technologies must be used.





Christopher B. Luchini
(Libertarian)

1. What are your qualifications for this position?

I have a PhD in High Energy Physics, and have run an oil and gas research and development company, and a GeoThermal green energy company since 2010. I am well versed in the physics, economics and regulatory environment of alternative energy generation, transmission and storage.

2. When evaluating requests for utility rate increases, what factors should be considered to ensure fairness to both the rate payers and the

companies involved?

Utility investors need to receive a risk weighted return on their investment. Unfortunately utility rates are set as a return-on-capital, giving management an incentive to spend more on imprudent or wasteful capital projects, as a way to increase profits. The PRC needs to be aggressive in discounting wasteful capital spending projects, so that rate payers don't pay for those projects. Rate payers must accept that build out of Green projects will require (hopefully temporary) higher rates.

3. What role, if any, does the PRC have in addressing climate change?

Given that the Energy Transmission Act explicitly directs the PRC to regulate electricity production away from carbon based energy, the PRC must act to implement the ETA to the best of their ability. Under the ETA it is the duty of the PRC to address carbon and other GreenHouse Gas emissions.

4. What should the PRC do to help ensure access to high quality broadband in underserved areas of the state?

This is special area of interest to me as a candidate. The telecom companies have received large incentives to build out rural broadband, with little progress on the ground to show for the public monies spent. The PRC should vigorously audit these contracts, and seek the return of funds, and compensation for violation of these broadband agreements. The PRC has at its disposal is regulatory action to compel competitors access to these broadband markets, to further induce deployment of broadband.

Public Education Commission, District 4

The Public Education Commission is a 10-person commission that is advisory to the Secretary of Education. The Commission authorizes and monitors all state-chartered charter schools. Commissioners must be 18 years of age, a United States citizen, and reside in the district they represent. They serve four-year staggered terms.



Laura Burrows
(Libertarian)

1. What in your background qualifies you to sit on the Public Education Commission?

I'm a long time educator; Education Coordinator of the Aerospace Education Center of Little Rock Arkansas; Field Outreach Educator for the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History; Board member of Pajarito Environmental Education Center 2000-2002, and an substitute teacher for Los Alamos Public Schools and UNM-LA. I am currently elected to the UNM-LA Advisory Board.

2. If elected, what are your two highest priorities?

Insure the widest possible adoption of Charter Schools in New Mexico Public Schools System, consistent with a quality education for students from a wide variety of cultural, socioeconomic backgrounds, and interests. I have a particular interest in supporting high quality education for non-college track students, not as an afterthought, but as a primary mission of specialized integrated curriculum, and

charter schools.

3. What is your position on opening new charter schools? Should there be a cap on the total number of state charter schools?

The very concept of putting a cap on the number of charter schools betrays an interest not in the welfare and benefit of the students, but rather of other institutional interests. There should be precisely, exactly as many charter schools as are needed to benefit the students, no more and no less.

4. How should the PEC assess the financial stability of schools before authorizing or renewing a charter?

Rationally and logically, and without political or institutional bias.



Rebekka Kay Burt
(Democrat)

1. What in your background qualifies you to sit on the Public Education Commission?

I started my career as an 8th grade English teacher in Rio Rancho. I spent several years as a policy analyst at ABQ City Council. I then combine my background in education and knowledge of policy to serve New Mexico at the Public Education Department. I most recently joined a NM technology company, supporting educators in sharing resources. I have a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a Master's degree in Business Administration, both from New Mexico

Highlands University.

2. If elected, what are your two highest priorities?

1. Stabilizing our state's education system after this global pandemic by partnering with the Public Education Department to provide high quality support, strategies & resources needed to schools and teachers at this unprecedented time. 2. As an educator, I know that students learn best when they find what they are passionate about and have the opportunity to grow in that passion. This is not always traditional learning. I would advocate to expand vocational education opportunities for students.

3. What is your position on opening new charter schools? Should there be a cap on the total number of state charter schools?

All families deserve to have high quality options for their children for public education. Not every student fits best into their neighborhood school. I would support all new applicants & renewals being held to a high standard. In contemplating a new charter or a cap, I would consider the area it is being proposed to ensure it is not already being served by several schools options. We have some areas in our state that have many options & some that don't have any. It should be more equitable.

4. How should the PEC assess the financial stability of schools before authorizing or renewing a charter?

I believe in maintaining a high standard of accountability with our public charter schools in finances, audits & performance. I would like to see transparency in spending in schools by showing where money is being spent and that money is being used to serve our students who need it the most. I would advocate to provide more support and training to charter leaders and governing boards on budgeting. I do believe malfeasance in finances is a valid reason to close or not renew a charter.

District Court Judge, 1st Judicial District

New Mexico's 33 counties are divided into 13 judicial districts. The First Judicial District includes Los Alamos, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe Counties. These are courts of general jurisdiction that hold jury trials in the following types of civil cases: tort, contract, real property rights and estate contests. The district courts in New Mexico generally have exclusive jurisdiction over domestic relations, mental health, appeals for administrative agencies and lower courts, criminal appeals, and juvenile cases. To

be eligible a person must be at least 35 years old, have practiced law for at least 6 years preceding assumption of office, and reside in the district for which he/she is elected. Judges serve six-year terms. Division 3 is a Family Court. Division 6 is a Civil Court. Division 10 is a Civil, Abuse & Neglect, Habeas Corpus Court.

Division 3



Shannon Broderick Bulman
(Democrat)

1. What experience and education do you bring that especially qualify you for this position?

District Court Judges bring an array of different professional experience to the bench. As a new judge, I have found it to be invaluable to have worked for decades in our community to assist individuals and families to assess their legal issues and resolve disputes, both through mediation and litigation. This work has afforded me some insight into the strengths of our families in Northern

New Mexico and the various social and economic challenges they encounter.

2. What can you as a judge do to improve the foster care system?

As a family court judge, I handle kinship guardianships, an alternative to state foster care. These cases have increased due to the devastating impact of substance use disorder. I must assess cases to ensure that each child is protected within the limits of state law. I refer parties to community services to support children, caregivers and those parents who seek recovery. The formal foster care system is created by the legislature and administered by CYFD; judges cannot change the system.

3. What policies are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political influence, and do you think judicial elections should be nonpartisan?

An independent judiciary is critical to maintain public confidence in the rule of law. Since 1988, the NM Constitution has required that judicial candidates be vetted by a politically balanced judicial nominating commission. In order to retain their seat, appointed judges must then stand for election in the general election immediately following their appointment. Public financing for some judicial positions has been another positive step toward removing political influence from the process.

Division 6



Bryan Paul Biedscheid
(Democrat)

1. What experience and education do you bring that especially qualify you for this position?

Juris Doctorate from the University of New Mexico Law School 22 years as a lawyer in private practice, often appearing before judges in the First Judicial District Court 1.5 year as a district court judge appointed by Governor Lujan Grisham 23 years as the husband of Jennifer Biedscheid (I can contribute to good decisions even when there is a smarter person in the room) Proud father of our 12-year old daughter (I know what it is like to continue to work with increasingly limited authority)

2. What policies are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political influence?

Providing information to keep the voters well-informed (thank you for producing this guide!) Public financing for judicial campaigns (exists at the state-wide level but not at the district court level) Guaranteed adequate funding for the judicial branch of government.

3. Should judicial elections be nonpartisan? Why or why not?

Yes. Going back to your last question, having to identify with a political party as a judicial candidate can alienate people appearing in court from the other party. As judges, we are tasked with being fair to everyone and I and my fellow judges work hard to be prepared for all hearings and treat all parties the same. The partisan election process can send a contrary message (but it is currently the process and I am running as a Democratic Party candidate in that process).

Division 10



Kate McGarry Ellenwood
(Democrat)

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

I have practiced law for 33 years, the last 20 in New Mexico. My many years of practice have brought me to a point where I now feel comfortable sitting on the bench and deciding the legal issues that come before the court. I am very good at looking at both sides of an issue, seeing both points of view and coming to a fair resolution of an issue or a case. My sense of fairness, attention to the law, and firm belief in justice help me bring compassion and neutrality to the decisions I make.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

A lot of the people who come to our court cannot afford an attorney. I would like to see us expand some of the current self-help programs to assist persons who are representing themselves.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

We need to keep the judiciary bipartisan. It is important that we have a bipartisan Judicial Commission to review applications for judicial positions that open when a judge leaves the bench. I believe the state funding of statewide judicial campaigns should be expanded to include all judicial races to keep interest groups out of judicial races. It is important that everyone who comes into our court feels they will have their case judged fairly.

District Attorney, 1st Judicial District

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



Mary V. Carmack-Altwies
(Democrat)

1. Describe your qualifications for this position.

I have been an attorney for 15 years and practiced in the criminal justice system the whole time. I first worked as a public defender, then running my own practice focusing on criminal defense and finally for 2 years in the District Attorney's office as the head of the special victims and violent crimes unit. Having worked both sides of the criminal justice system, I know what it takes to make it more fair, just, and efficient.

2. How would you deal with repeat DWI offenders?

Repeat offenders need effective and on-going treatment, but they also need consequences because they make all of us less safe on our roadways. We will

prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law while also focusing on getting them services they desperately need.

3. What are the most urgent needs of the District Attorney's office?

The office needs effective management to fully administer justice in the First Judicial District.

4. What changes, if any, are needed in New Mexico law regarding criminal cases?

Our laws make it too easy to prosecute low level and non-violent cases and much harder to prosecute violent and multiple offenders. Therefore our prison system is filled with people struggling with addiction with no focus on treatment. We need to change the way we view substance use disorders and offer more intervention and treatment so that the low-level offenders don't become violent offenders.

Los Alamos County Clerk

The Los Alamos County Clerk's office handles voter registration and runs elections. It is also responsible for recording and filing public documents, issuing marriage licenses, maintaining official documents for the County Council such as Ordinances, Resolutions, and Council Minutes and serves as Clerk to the Probate Court. The County Clerk serves a four-year term.



Naomi D. Maestas
(Democrat)

1. What are your highest priorities for this office?

To continue to provide professional, unbiased, efficient, and courteous customer service. To continue to strengthen election processes and ensure they are carried out in a transparent and ethical manner, while always protecting the integrity of the ballot and the right to vote for all. To continue to enhance continuity and technical advances improving public interactions.

To continue state and national relationships, staying

abreast of current laws promoting legislation beneficial to the county.

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

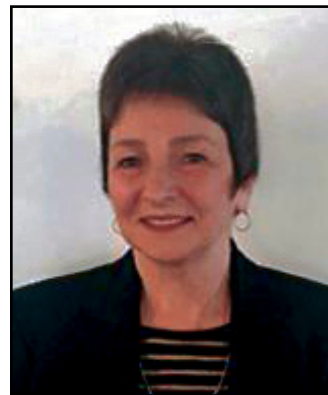
Expand civic engagement, voter education, and outreach efforts. Reinforce relationships with our partners in democracy, soliciting voter registration agents, poll workers, and advisory groups. Remove barriers to the ballot box and work closely with our disability and elderly communities to ensure the best voting capabilities are offered to them. Engage and inspire high school and college aged voters. Strengthen the voting culture through fair, impartial, accessible, and transparent elections.

3. Do you support sending every voter an absentee ballot for all elections? Why or why not?

Yes, as it is a safe and easy method of voting, which is proven to increase voter participation. It is also more cost-effective and more convenient for voters. It gives voters the option to make their voice heard without the stress of finding childcare, taking time off work, or worrying about a global pandemic. No one should ever have to risk their health or the safety of their family to make their voice heard in any election.

Los Alamos County Council

The Los Alamos County Council is the County's governing body and was created by the Los Alamos County Charter. The Council consists of seven members elected at large for four-year staggered terms. Three seats will be filled in the 2020 election by the three candidates receiving the most votes. The County Council generally holds two regular sessions per month, plus one work session. Its members also serve as liaisons with the County's Boards and Commissions and other governmental entities.



Denise Derkacs
(Democrat)

1. What do you consider the two most important issues facing the county? How can they be addressed?

Two key issues facing the County are a housing shortage and commercial sustainability. To address the need identified in the 2019 housing study for more than 1600 affordable and market-rate housing units, the County should explore all types of housing and all possible building sites, and do so with ongoing community input. To support local

commerce, the County should streamline its permitting processes and implement zoning changes that facilitate small business development and sustainability.

2. What environmental goals or policies, if any, would you champion as Councilor?

Zero Waste is an overarching environmental policy I fully support. Zero Waste focuses on waste prevention, through conscious consumption and conservation, and reducing trash sent to landfills, by reusing, recycling, and composting. To complement recycling and yard waste collections, the County is initiating food composting to reduce food waste in the landfill. I support plans to purchase yard compost bins and countertop food-waste containers and conduct a municipal food composting pilot program.

3. What ideas for economic vitality in Los Alamos would you support and encourage?

Economic vitality depends upon housing, infrastructure, and commerce. New housing development will support population growth, which in turn, will stimulate infrastructure improvements and increase spending in the local retail community. The County should provide infrastructure improvements to enable retail businesses and start-up industries that will strengthen the economic base. The County also should encourage tourism by promoting Los Alamos as a great place to live, work, play, and stay.

4. Some parts of our downtown are empty or poorly used. Since this is private land, how can the County address this problem?

High commercial rents and property prices, driven in part by Laboratory rentals, contribute to the long-term challenge of vacant properties. The State property tax code does not allow municipalities to penalize vacant properties. A vacant commercial building ordinance with associated fines, zoning restrictions on first-floor offices, mixed-use zoning designations, plus focused efforts to connect redevelopment investors with property owners are possible solutions the County should explore.



Aaron Dennis Winter Walker
(No Party Affiliation)

1. What do you consider the two most important issues facing the county? How can they be addressed?

Housing and utility infrastructure. One major issue with housing is the lack of (actual) affordable housing. We must increase the affordable housing availability by utilizing inclusive zoning, and install requirements to meet affordable housing needs. Our utility infrastructure is aging and needs addressing. We must stop the revenue transfer from the utility to the county to provide a better means of infrastructure modernization. We don't need this

regressive tax on the residents.

2. What environmental goals or policies, if any, would you champion as Councilor?

Continued investment in the Carbon Free Power Project. Nuclear power is our only option to become carbon neutral and keep utility rates reasonable. Bear resistant roll carts for residents. I will ask for a 3-5 year phased approach for the county to provide bear resistant trash cans to all residents. We must start getting carts to residents in the most bear prone areas, and work outward from there until every resident has a bear resistant trash can. We must preserve our wildlife.

3. What ideas for economic vitality in Los Alamos would you support and encourage?

The county needs to address the issue of extremely high commercial rents. We must look in to ways to remove the incentive for keeping commercial property vacant. This could be in the form of financial penalties or other methods. Another option to pair with this would be to block LANL from renting first-floor space in town. This would likely reduce the massively inflated commercial rent prices and bring them more in line with what the county can support. Commercial rent is too high.

4. Some parts of our downtown are empty or poorly used. Since this is private land, how can the County address this problem?

The county has to address the issue in a way that makes the landlord take notice. This means making financial repercussions for vacant commercial properties that are vacant for a lengthy time period. We must remove the incentive to keeping the property vacant and the rent high by preventing LANL from renting first floor space in the town. We also must work at getting the old and aging buildings up to code or redeveloped. This needs to be put on the landlord, not the people of the county.



Sean Jameson Williams
(Democrat)

1. What do you consider the two most important issues facing the county? How can they be addressed?

I'll address business in another question, so let's talk housing. Our housing shortage is really a dirt shortage: we're landlocked between DOE, NFS, and pueblos. The two paths forward in a shortage are to get more or use what you have efficiently.

I support continuing to apply for land from DOE, despite recent land controversies. I also support increasing height and density in the downtown areas within current zoning limits, but this will require addressing our systemic downtown problems first.

2. What environmental goals or policies, if any, would you champion as Councilor?

We can pursue environmentally responsible policies while investing in our community interests. First, I will join Councilor Robinson's fight to provide bear-proof trash cans. I support a ban on single-use plastic bags, because blanket costs don't create a competitive advantage for any one business. I will support investments in renewable energy where it makes financial sense; for the CFPP, I am pro-nuclear but will assess continued investment in the project on its technical and financial merits.

3. What ideas for economic vitality in Los Alamos would you support and encourage?

We need to create fertile ground for entrepreneurs, which in Los Alamos comes entirely down to cost and quality of property. The primary cost driver in Los Alamos is the lab and subcontractors: their deep pockets allow commercial rents to increase dramatically over time. The most important policy change is a zoning ban on downtown, ground-floor, non-customer-facing offices so prospective business owners do not have to compete with LANL. If we bring costs down, entrepreneurship will thrive here.

4. Some parts of our downtown are empty or poorly used. Since this is private land, how can the County address this problem?

It's only feasible to "sit on" commercial property because negligence is cheap here. The

county is notoriously hard on residential negligence but turns a blind eye to commercial negligence. We already have tools to address this: the development (Ch. 16) and nuisance (Ch. 18) codes. One way to deploy them on blighted downtown spaces is with a "clean and lien" strategy, where the county brings commercial property to code and records the cost as a lien, which can lead to foreclosure if unpaid.



James E. Rickman
(Libertarian)

1. What do you consider the two most important issues facing the county? How can they be addressed?

1) Sustainability: We must sustain the amenities we have to ensure that future generations enjoy the same quality of life we enjoy. We must protect our aquifer, natural areas, and other assets through careful planning. 2) Other communities will argue entitlement to LANL GRT revenue.

We must demonstrate responsible use of our financial resources, right-size our bureaucracy, work with neighbor communities on mutual issues, and demonstrate that Los Alamos bears the greatest impact of hosting LANL.

2. What environmental goals or policies, if any, would you champion as Councilor?

Climate change is an existential threat to our species. We currently have no national or global strategy to mitigate climate change. I believe the first steps must be made at the individual and local level. Every county project should be conducted with an eye toward sustainability. The community's free bus system can provide incentives for individuals to reduce their carbon footprint. The utilities department should encourage individual households to use "green" energy or to go "off-the-grid."

3. What ideas for economic vitality in Los Alamos would you support and encourage?

I strongly believe government should create a business-friendly community by providing outstanding quality of life, but it shouldn't attempt to manipulate the marketplace. County government and its publicly funded subcontractors should stop picking "winners and losers" by attempting to recruit businesses that compete with existing successful business. The current Los Alamos business climate is the result of 30-plus years of County-sanctioned entities attempting to manipulate the local market.

4. Some parts of our downtown are empty or poorly used. Since this is private land, how can the County address this problem?

Except in the most egregious circumstances, individual property rights are sacrosanct. I find it repugnant to hear local politicians talking about using Eminent Domain or nuisance tax levies to wrest real estate from the hands of property owners. Conversations with property owners can help leaders perhaps understand why property remains underutilized. That understanding can then lead government to help implement appropriate moral solutions to turning blighted property into something productive.



Rodney Gerode Roberson
(Democrat)

1. What do you consider the two most important issues facing the county? How can they be addressed?

1. Affordable Housing: a. One of the long-range solutions could be getting suitable land from DOE. b. Code Development and other policies, to ensure every house is habitable and inhabited. 2. Economic Development: a. Business environment must consider the impact of internet competition

(e.g Amazon, Netflix) b. What local businesses can be successful here: 1) Service Industry (plumbers, electricians, nail salons, restaurants).

2. What environmental goals or policies, if any, would you champion as Councilor?

1. To safely, efficiently and with full transparency champion the cleanup of legacy contamination and waste resulting from nuclear weapons development and government-sponsored nuclear research at LANL. 2. Continue to Improve Recycling Programs. 3. Continue to develop walking and bike trails and other outdoor recreational opportunities. 4. Don't overburden our natural resources (e.g. water).

3. What ideas for economic vitality in Los Alamos would you support and encourage?

1. Housing (Affordable and Market Rate) a. Increased Height and Density acceptable to our community. b. But, don't overburden our natural resources (e.g. water). 2. Quality of Life a. Amenities (restaurants, theaters, etc.) b. Outdoor Recreation 3. Diversify Economy a. Support spinoffs from the Lab b. Tourism (help to support amenities) c. LANL will always dominate our economy.

4. Some parts of our downtown are empty or poorly used. Since this is private land, how can the County address this problem?

1. Zoning for multi-use, commercial and residential. 2. Zoning to keep LANL from pricing businesses out. 3. Leveraging tourism to help support and encourage small businesses in Los Alamos and White Rock. 4. Streamline the business permitting processes.



David W. Reagor
(Republican)

1. What do you consider the two most important issues facing the county? How can they be addressed?

One dominant issue for us. In any small city it is hard to maintain the businesses that provide services to the community. These services, healthcare, restaurants, etc., are vital to the quality of life, and the county government needs to be an ally that promotes their success. In addition, we need more businesses that bring in revenue from outside the county. Los Alamos

County, both the council and the staff, must view the support of local business and new initiatives as their primary goal.

2. What environmental goals or policies, if any, would you champion as Councilor?

Los Alamos County has recently entered into a Carbon-free power plan. I support the modular reactor part of the plan, as the current state law leaves us few options. As for solar and wind, we should and do allow homeowners to contribute their power to the grid, but will encounter endlessly escalating costs and/or unreliable power if the county uses these sources for central generation. Instead, the county council should focus on the low cost delivery of utilities to the citizens.

3. What ideas for economic vitality in Los Alamos would you support and encourage?

This is a company town and even the directors of our largest employer have little control of the final employment. In addition, the whole county has had to evacuate through narrow highways leading to long traffic jams. The long-term solution for the county and the laboratory is to complete a transportation link from the White Rock area to I-15. This will act as a buffer for the housing market and improve access to the laboratory and the county.

4. Some parts of our downtown are empty or poorly used. Since this is private land, how can the County address this problem?

Some properties in the county have been closed for many years. This is a waste of space and the town appears to visitors to be in collapse. I am a supporter of private property, but after ten years it is time to use eminent domain to convert these properties to public use. We have to use a public process to define that use and qualify for eminent domain, but the town has an overwhelming need for housing and services.

Judicial Retention Election

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

Judge of the Court of Appeals - Retention

Jacqueline R. Medina
(Retention Election)

1. How have your training, professional experience and interests prepared you to serve on this court?

My 29 years of legal experience includes being a judge on the New Mexico Court of Appeals since 2018, a Children's Court Attorney, Prosecutor, and Assistant Attorney General. I have dedicated my entire career to public service. I currently serve on the Judicial Education and Training Advisory Committee, have mentored law students, new attorneys, and I am a former Family Selection Committee member for the Greater Albuquerque Habitat for Humanity. I bring experience and integrity to the Court.

2. Do you believe that all persons in New Mexico have fair and equal access to legal assistance and the legal system? If not, what reforms do you support? Please explain.

I was born and raised in Taos, County New Mexico. I learned at an early age that not everyone has equal access to legal assistance and our legal system. This realization inspired me to pursue a legal education and to devote my career to public service. Prior to serving as a judge I served as a volunteer attorney at legal clinics in order to provide much needed pro bono assistance to members of our community. I support and encourage the bar to hold more legal clinics across New Mexico.

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

Shortly after my election to the Court, my colleagues and I created divisions and worked tirelessly to tackle the Court's historic backlog. Working together with our staff attorneys, paralegals, clerks, and law clerk, we improved the efficiency of the Court. I look forward to exploring other changes we can make to continue improving the efficiency and quality of our work. I compliment and thank our staff who have kept our Court open and running during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

4. Do you favor nonpartisan elections for the judiciary? Why or why not?

In a non-partisan election, candidates do not run as belonging to a political party and their political affiliation is not identified on the ballot. Because a candidate's party affiliation is generally known or can easily be determined by the organizations endorsing a candidate and given the availability of public financing for appellate court judicial candidates, I do not favor changing our partisan judicial elections





District Court Judge, First Judicial District - Retention

**Francis J. Mathew – Division 1
(Retention Election)**

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

As a lawyer, I represented individuals, local business entities, national companies, banking institutions, debtors, creditors, plaintiffs and defendants. I have experienced litigation as a party as well as a representative attorney. I have participated in the community as a board member on non-profits and advisory school boards. I believe these experiences have given me perspective, empathy, patience and an ability to discern the truth as well as a desire to provide a sense of fairness.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

The First Judicial District Court is currently understaffed. All employees are subject to the stress of overwork and burnout due to the demands made upon them with the limited resources provided to them to accomplish the services they have been tasked to perform. The First Judicial District and all districts around the State are in need of more qualified staff employees. Our employees are under paid for the work they do and the demands made upon them. Staff salaries need to be increased.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

Providing the judiciary with funding in a way that is not dependent on a political system by way of legislative grant and subject to a gubernatorial veto would assist this process. New Mexico should keep judges out of the political process by using all retention elections after a judicial candidate has been nominated by a bi-partisan commission and appointed by the Governor. Having judges go through partisan elections risks having judges incur political debts.



**Maria E. Sanchez-Gagne – Division 2
(Retention Election)**

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

Serving as a district court judge, I bring twenty-four years of extensive litigation experience in criminal and civil law. As a bilingual native New Mexican, I bring a cultural awareness and understanding to those I serve in the First Judicial District.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

Increased diversity of judges in the First Judicial District is needed to reflect the multi-cultural diverse population that reside in the counties of Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Los Alamos. The Supreme Court has established a commission to study issues related to race and bias in the state's justice system and to promote diversity among judges and judicial employees. Hopefully through the work of this commission diversity among judges will be promoted and reflected in the First Judicial Court.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

The New Mexico Code of Judicial Conduct requires that a judge shall disqualify himself or herself in any proceeding in which the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned. It is imperative that a judge not only consider an

obvious ethical conflict, but also consider how their impartiality may be viewed by the public on a case where a judge may have a current or former professional relationship or a political affiliation with any of the parties or their family members.



**Sylvia F. Lamar – Division 4
(Retention Election)**

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

I have a combined 37 years as a Family Law Attorney and then as a Family Law Judge, as well as familial knowledge of the effects mental health illnesses and Substance Use Disorders have on the families of our community. During my 8 years on the bench I have met regularly with directors and employees of programs providing counseling, substance use treatment, and immigration services in NNM. I am the appointed NM representative to the National Judicial Opioid Taskforce.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

The First Judicial District Court has a Self Help Division and Family Court Services which are used extensively by family Court litigants. Both of these, as well as all other departments, would benefit from increased resources. Our court is severely understaffed, and our staff is not paid enough. We need to increase the number of positions, and increase salaries so that our employees do not burn out and leave for work elsewhere.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

The checks and balances provided by our three branches of government. The judicial nominating commissions are bipartisan, resulting in the appointment of qualified attorneys to judicial positions.



**Jason C. Lidyard – Division 5
(Retention Election)**

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

After nearly a decade of applying the criminal law in Northern New Mexico, I have learned a great deal about our criminal justice system and the intersectionality of crime, poverty, mental health, and substance use. In my two and a half years as a district judge, I have used this knowledge to be innovative and to promote change in our system so that it not only ensures the health and safety of our community but also affords a fair, just, and compassionate application of the law.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

Changes should be made to pre-trial and post-conviction supervision of criminal defendants. Our current supervision schemes generate a revolving door of short-term incarceration for non-violent, technical violations which, in turn, generates instability for defendants and inhibits their ability to rehabilitate and become "productive members of society." We need to evaluate the efficacy of these supervision schemes and their potential to penalize based on socioeconomic status and race.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

When a judge is subject to retention by popular vote, there is little insulation from politics. If the public dislikes a judge's decision, the public can vote that judge off the bench. With this in mind, the law, at times, requires a judge to make rulings that

the public will dislike. As a result, a controversial ruling can jeopardize a judge's retention. The judiciary, however, cannot function unless judges follow the law without fear of politics. That is our duty and that is what we do.



**T. Glenn Ellington – Division 7
(Retention Election)**

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

I am a native of Northern New Mexico. I was born in the Espanola Valley. For over 30 years I have served as a public defender, Chief Public Defender for the State of NM, District Court Judge, private attorney, Secretary of the Department of Taxation and Revenue, and a judge on the New Mexico Court of Appeals. I have had a great deal of experience in many areas of

the law including civil, family, child protective services, and adult criminal cases. I bring this broad experience to every case.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

The First Judicial District would benefit from the expansion of specialized courts, specifically problem-solving courts similar to those established in other districts in the State. An example of a problem-solving court is that the First does not have is an ICWA Court. There is currently one in operation in the 2nd Judicial District. ICWA Courts address the needs of Native American families in child protective services cases.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

Transparency is the key. As a result of the pandemic, the First District, as well other state courts throughout NM, have established video and audio internet sites which allow public access to all non-sequestered cases. For the first time in NM history, the public is able to access court proceedings as hearings are being conducted. This innovation, created by necessity, allows the public to see first-hand courts in operations. The log-in information is posted on the court website.



**Mary Marlowe Sommer – Division 8
(Retention Election)**

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

Prior to coming to the bench, I worked in private practice for approximately 18 years. I began working for the Court in 2008 and became a judge in 2010. I have served on Family court, Children's court, Adult Criminal court and our Drug Courts. In 2017, I became the Chief Judge for our District. I have a strong work ethic. I value candor. I have strong organizational skills. I am fair and empathetic to victims and defendants alike; but I am necessarily firm

in my decision-making.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

The Santa Fe Magistrate Court is in need of a new courthouse. The Espanola Magistrate Court needs facility improvements. The Santa Fe District Court, the Santa Fe and Espanola Magistrate Courts are seriously understaffed. Employees are doing two or more jobs,. Because of our merger with the Magistrate Courts, our Human Resources and Administrative Divisions have taken on more work. We need competitive salaries to get and keep employees.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

I think the existing New Mexico Code of Judicial Conduct keeps the judiciary independent from political interference. A copy of the New Mexico Code of Judicial Conduct can be found on New Mexico One Source which is a free legal research tool.



**Matthew Justin Wilson – Division 9
(Retention Election)**

1. What attributes and experience do you bring to your service as a current judge?

My goal is to be conscientious and thoughtful regarding the decisions that I make, knowing that the cases that I preside over impact individual lives. Having practiced law for 16 years and having served on the bench for an additional 7 years, I have a strong understanding of the law and strive every day to apply the law fairly and impartially, without forgetting

my common sense. I also endeavor every day to be courteous and patient with everyone who appears in my courtroom.

2. Given your experience as a judge, what improvements are needed in the First Judicial District Court, and how could those improvements be implemented?

As a long-time member of the Access to Justice Committee, I have seen the positive impact that is made when the legal community reaches out to the public to provide free legal services. In a similar vein, the court should implement a civics program to educate the public, especially children, about the role of the judiciary as an equal and independent branch of government with a primary function of preserving our fundamental rights and our basic freedoms within our society.

3. What policies and/or ethical practices are critical to keeping the judiciary independent from political interference?

As members of a separate branch of government, judges should exhibit a professional commitment to justice by applying legal precedent and the law to the facts in each individual case while trying to avoid improper influences. By achieving justice one case at a time, you build public respect and legitimacy, thus maintaining judicial independence.



Constitutional Amendments

Constitutional Amendment 1

PROPOSING TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO TO PROVIDE THAT THE PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION CONSIST OF THREE MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR FROM A LIST OF PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED NOMINEES SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR BY A NOMINATING COMMITTEE AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND THAT THE COMMISSION IS REQUIRED TO REGULATE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND MAY BE REQUIRED TO REGULATE OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANIES.

Summary of Proposed Constitutional Amendment 1

Constitutional Amendment 1 would amend Article 11, Section 1 of the Constitution of New Mexico to reduce the number of Public Regulation Commission (PRC) members to three, with no more than two members from the same political party. Members would no longer be elected, but instead would be appointed for six-year terms by the governor, with the consent of the senate, from a list of nominees submitted to the governor through a newly established Public Regulation Commission Nominating Committee. Constitutional Amendment 1 would also amend Article 11, Section 2 of the Constitution of New Mexico to narrow the scope of the PRC's constitutionally granted regulatory powers to public utilities, while still allowing the legislature to assign responsibility for the regulation of other public service companies to the commission by law.

Arguments For

1. By insulating the commission from electoral politics, the commissioners may be better able to carry out their duties in an unbiased fashion. They could also focus on the interests of the ratepayers throughout the state rather than individual districts.
2. It would provide for increased vetting of commissioners and better ensure that well-qualified individuals serve on the PRC. New Mexico would join the vast majority of states that regulate utilities through governor-appointed commissions.
3. The PRC is a quasi-judicial body. Improved screening and qualification requirements would help ensure that commissioners possess the experience and training necessary to make decisions within the complex legal framework that governs public utility regulation.

Arguments Against

1. It does not change how the PRC actually functions. The amendment leaves it up to the legislature to provide for how commissioners will be evaluated and what qualifications commissioners will be required to have.
2. It removes the voters' ability to hold commissioners accountable for their actions. Electing commissioners from their respective districts allows the public more direct oversight of commissioners and their decisions.
3. The process to remove a commissioner would be more involved and take more time.

Constitutional Amendment 2

PROPOSING TO AMEND ARTICLE 20, SECTION 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF NEW MEXICO TO PERMIT THE ADJUSTMENT BY LAW OF TERMS OF NON-STATEWIDE ELECTED OFFICERS AND TO STANDARDIZE THE DATE AN OFFICER BEGINS TO SERVE.

Summary of Proposed Constitutional Amendment 2

Constitutional Amendment 2 proposes to amend Article 20, Section 3 of the Constitution of New Mexico to allow the legislature to adjust the term of a state, county or district officer to align or stagger the election of officers for a particular state, county or district office throughout the state. No statewide elective office would be subject to adjustment. The proposed amendment also clarifies that officers elected to fill a vacancy in office shall take office on the first day of January following their election.

Arguments For

1. It provides the legislature with the constitutional authority to ensure uniformity of elections and balance in the number of offices on the ballot. The legislature can address election cycle concerns without requiring individual constitutional amendments for each office.
2. It would protect against legislative overreach by requiring the legislature to adopt specific legislative findings supporting an adjustment. In order to make an adjustment the legislature must find that it is necessary for consistency in the timing of elections for that office or to balance the number of offices appearing on the ballot.
3. Balancing the number of contests appearing on a ballot during alternating election cycles and implementing a standardized start date for all newly elected officers may help alleviate issues created by an overloaded or long ballot and increase efficiency in the state's administration of elections and training.

Arguments Against

1. It expands the legislature's constitutional powers over election policy issues and could be legally challenged. Although it requires that a legislative finding is necessary, it may allow the legislature to amend terms for other reasons as long as the finding states that it is meant to provide for consistency or balance.
2. It may be overly broad. Not only those offices that are in need of being aligned or staggered on the presidential or gubernatorial general election ballots may be affected. It gives the legislature broad discretion to change the election cycle in which a state county or district office is elected.
3. Some incumbent officeholders will gain an extra two years in office, while others will serve terms that expire two years early for reasons unrelated to their performance. Additionally, when election cycles are being synchronized, term limits will not apply to the affected offices.

General Obligation Bonds and Taxes

A bond represents a debt for money borrowed by a government to finance capital improvement projects. The State of New Mexico promises to repay the amount borrowed, plus interest, over a period of time for each General Obligation bond that is approved by voters. The bonds are called “General Obligation” because payment of the debt service (principal plus interest) is a general obligation of the State and its property owners through property taxation. According to the Board of Finance Division of the NM Department of Finance and Administration, the specific amount of property taxes collected in a given year is attributable to a number of factors, including the amount of debt service required for existing General Obligation bonds, the projected debt service required for the new bond issue, the latest assessed valuation of net taxable property, cash balances in bond debt service accounts, the date of issuance, and the actual interest rate obtained on the bond sale. Based on the assumption that all three bond issues will be passed by voters, the property tax year 2020 mil levy has been set at 1.36 mils, which is the same as the 2018 and 2019 rates. The State Board of Finance estimates that over a ten-year period, the three issues on the ballot would cost approximately \$10.99 per \$100,000 of asset value. Of the annual average \$10.99, Bond Issue A accounts for \$1.83, Bond Issue B accounts for \$0.54, and Bond Issue C accounts for \$8.62.

2020 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act

The New Mexico Legislature passed the 2020 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act detailing projects that would be funded by these bonds. No bonds will be issued or sold under the act until the state’s registered voters have voted upon and approved the bonds. Each bond is voted upon separately with a “For” or “Against” question.

Summary: The three 2020 bond issues ask for voter approval to issue general obligation bonds as follows:

Bond Issue A, in an amount not to exceed \$33,292,141 to make capital expenditures for certain senior citizen facility improvements, construction, and equipment acquisition projects;

Bond Issue B, in an amount not to exceed \$9,751,433 to make capital expenditures for academic, public school, tribal, and public library resource acquisitions; and

Bond Issue C, in an amount not to exceed \$156,358,475 to make capital expenditures for certain higher education, special schools, and tribal schools capital improvements and acquisitions.

The total for all three questions, including bond issuance costs, is **\$199,402,049**. A complete breakdown of the designated projects under each bond issue can be found on the New Mexico Legislature’s website: <https://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/20%20Regular/final/SB0207.pdf>.

Bond Question A – Aging and Long-Term Services Department

The 2020 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of senior citizen facility improvement, construction and equipment

acquisition bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed thirty-three million two hundred ninety-two thousand one hundred forty-one dollars (\$33,292,141) to make capital expenditures for certain senior citizen facility improvement, construction and equipment acquisition projects and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?

For_____ Against_____;

Bond Question B – Library Acquisitions

The 2020 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of library acquisition bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed nine million seven hundred fifty-one thousand four hundred thirty-three dollars (\$9,751,433) to make capital expenditures for academic, public school, tribal and public library resource acquisitions and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?

For_____ Against_____

Bond Question C – Higher Education

The 2020 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of higher education, special schools and tribal schools capital improvement and acquisition bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed one hundred fifty-six million three hundred fifty-eight thousand four hundred seventy-five dollars (\$156,358,475) to make capital expenditures for certain higher education, special schools and tribal schools capital improvements and acquisitions and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?

For_____ Against_____

Each question set forth in this section includes a specific work or object to be financed by the bonds. If any such question is not approved by a majority vote of the electorate at the state’s 2020 general election, the issuance of bonds for the work or object specified by the question shall be excluded from and shall not be part of the 2020 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act. The failure of a question to be approved by the electorate at the 2020 general election shall not affect those questions that are approved at the election.

Information provided by the NM Department of Finance and Administration.