

# STATE POSITIONS

*In the adopted form of the LWVNM Positions, all positions begin with the words, "The League of Women Voters of New Mexico." For example, "The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports..."*

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## GOVERNMENT

### The Constitution

Supports a New Mexico Constitution which is concise and comprehensible, providing a basic framework adaptable to present and future needs of state government. LWVNM supports a less restrictive amending process in the Constitution. (1969)

### The Executive

Supports four-year terms for state executive officers, preferably elected in non-presidential years with limitation of two consecutive terms in the same office. LWVNM supports a shortened ballot. (1969; rev.1983,1995)

### The Judiciary

Supports a unified court system, adequately financed, with centralized administration and fiscal control achieved through:

1. Selection of judges of the higher courts by a method similar to the American Bar Association Plan which proposes that judges be appointed by the governor from a screened list submitted from a non-partisan nominating commission and be subject, at intervals, to election for retention or rejection;
2. Adequate personnel for the juvenile court;
3. An advisory judicial council. (1962; rev.1987)

### Local Government

Supports home rule for municipalities. (1969)

Supports a combined form of city/county government. (2000)

### Apportionment

Supports apportionment of the Legislature of the State of New Mexico which shall be based

substantially on population and shall meet the provisions of the Federal Voting Rights Act. (1982)

### Term Limitations

Opposes term limitations for our state legislators. (1992; rev.1995)

### State Personnel

Supports a merit system of selection, retention, promotion and dismissal of personnel in state government. (1954; rev.1983)

### Election Procedures

Supports:

1. Protection of the right of every citizen to vote; (1999)
2. Procedures to guarantee the integrity of all statutory methods of voting in New Mexico; (1999)
3. Funding to meet the requirements of the law and to serve the needs of the voters to ensure that elections are conducted accurately, fairly, and efficiently; (1999)
4. A centralized voter registration and election management system; (1999)
5. Statewide uniformity in early voting for all elections; (1999)
6. An all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in the primary election; (1969, rev.1971, 1983, 1987,1995)
7. Firm and consistent enforcement of campaign finance reporting laws with significant penalties for non-compliance, and wide public dissemination of reports; (1999)
8. More direct citizen involvement in the candidate selection process for special elections to fill a vacancy in the US House of Representatives; (1999)
9. Amending the State Constitution to allow run-off elections in the case of non-partisan elections; (1998)

- 10.Consolidation of elections in New Mexico. (2001)

### State Finance

Believes that a fair tax must be:

1. Equitable, taking into consideration relevant differences between persons, such as their annual income;
2. Certain, not arbitrary;
3. Convenient with respect to timing and manner of payment;
4. Economical to collect;
5. Adequate to finance the essentials of government.

The tax system in New Mexico should be progressive.

In evaluating the average burden of taxation within the state, taxes should be compared with income of New Mexico residents; in comparing the burden of taxation in New Mexico with the burden imposed by other states, state and local taxes should be combined.

Tax credits and/or deductions should be evaluated based on promotion of equity and the efficiency with which they achieve their purpose.

Tax credits may be a means of providing relief from the regressive nature of the sales and property tax. (1971; rev.1975, 1983, 1989)

### Campaign Finance and Ethics

Believes that methods of financing political campaigns and public offices should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, maximize fiscal accountability and transparency, and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process (2002; rev. 2007)

Supports legislative compensation that is fair and reasonable, recognizing that there is a cost to

government and that the cost should be paid by the taxpayers of New Mexico. (1993)

Supports a fair, equitable and reasonable combination of public/private funding of campaigns for New Mexico state elective offices. Participation in the public/private financing should be voluntary. Participants should agree to voluntary spending limits. The legislation should provide for a source of revenue to fund the program. (2002; rev. 2007)

Supports limits on gifts and contributions to candidates for elected offices and to the holders of elected and appointed offices. (2007)

Supports firm and consistent enforcement of campaign finance, gift and contribution reporting laws with significant penalties for non-compliance and wide public dissemination of reports. (1999.)

An independent office or commission should have the authority to oversee campaign finance and gift laws as well as other ethics rules and lobbying laws, to receive allegations and complaints, to conduct investigations and to present cases to the appropriate enforcement agencies. (2007)

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## NATURAL RESOURCES

Believes that state government should accept a major responsibility in addressing the societal problems associated with resource development in the state. We believe that the state is the most effective level of government to attack these problems. The state should make planning expertise available to the local communities and work with them in identifying problems and choosing solutions. Where rapid development makes the cost of facilities prohibitive for local communities, there should be a

state mechanism for providing necessary financial assistance. Coordination of national, regional, state and local government efforts, with effective citizen participation is necessary.

Supports the principle that environmental and social costs of resource development should be borne by the ultimate consumer. However, sharply higher prices as a result of covering environmental and social costs should be coupled with a mechanism to keep those costs from bearing unduly on any one segment of the population.

Supports a strong state resource conservation policy. The state should provide leadership, set a public example in its operations, develop and enforce regulations promoting conservation, and actively educate its citizens.

The protection of ground and surface water from contamination and the control and reduction in volume of hazardous, toxic and radioactive substances before they reach the land, air or water should be major parts of resource conservation policy. The state should not be prevented from having stricter control standards than those of the federal government. Public Health and well being should rank as the highest priority. The use of alternate energy sources should be encouraged. (1976; rev.1987)

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## SOCIAL POLICY

### Child Care

Believes there should be an adequate supply of good quality child care throughout New Mexico, both in child care centers and in family day care homes, to be implemented by:

1. Fiscally responsible planning and use of private, industrial and government funds;
2. Appropriate licensing requirements and supervisory procedures;

3. Support services for parents;
4. Efforts to make quality child care available to all who need such services;
5. Programs to meet the before and after school needs of school-age children. (1978; rev.1983,2003)

### Juvenile Concerns

Believes that our state has no resource of greater importance or value than its children. Programs, personnel and facilities that promote and encourage the child's fullest development must be a high priority within the private sector as well as in city, county and state governments.

Believes that social and economic concerns and juvenile justice must be interconnected for the fair and equitable treatment of all children.

Supports the development of an integrated plan for the continuum of services, available to all children and their families. The programs in the continuum should include, but not be limited to: prevention, intervention, family support, education, physical, emotional and social well being, substitute care, and juvenile justice programs. The programs and associated services in the continuum should be community-based whenever feasible.

Supports the establishment of sound program standards for all facilities serving children and youth; e.g., day care, foster care, follow-up services, residential care and reintegration centers and the development of clear professional guidelines for all staff members of such programs. Programs should include but not be limited to: Physical and emotional health and well-being

- Crisis intervention services available locally
- Community diagnostic and/or evaluation procedures
- Removal of behavioral health from managed care and return of "fee for service"

- Inclusion of group homes, residential treatment centers, foster and therapeutic foster homes.

#### Substitute Care

- Carefully supervised crisis shelter care that would separate neglected and abused children from juvenile delinquents .

#### Family Support

- Community-based programs for intervention and diversion.
- Services should include family, individual and group counseling and therapy, youth advocacy and referrals.
- Parenting education
- Family crisis and domestic relations intervention.

#### Juvenile Justice

- Trained and fully qualified judges, police, probation personnel, lawyers, providers, appointed advocates and others in the juvenile justice system who work with children, thus promoting full and complete attention to the unique needs of each child
- Secure residential treatment facilities to meet the identified needs
- Development and support of alternatives to incarceration through community-based programs with emphasis on diversion and reintegration, separate from institutional care
- Due process and legal representation at all stages of the child's contact within the law
- Provision of legal and safe detention accommodations for alleged and adjudicated delinquents who are in custody
- Monitoring of substitute care through Citizen Review Boards and Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Community forensic diagnostic and /or evaluation services
- Education provided for all youth within the juvenile justice system. (1977; rev. 1978, 1979, 1985, 1993, 1995, 2003)
- The League supports legislation making criminal

sexual penetration of a child thirteen to eighteen years of age a felony when the perpetrator is in a position of authority over the child. (2001)

#### **Health Care**

Supports a health care system that provides a comprehensive level of health care for New Mexico residents and recognizes the need for efficient management of health care costs.

Believes that any health system implemented should have the following:

Quality health coverage for all New Mexicans. Every New Mexican should have full health care coverage, a benefit package that is at least equal to the best plan offered to state employees, and access to the services covered. Participation should be mandatory. Pre-existing conditions should not be excluded from coverage.

Effective cost management. Cost management should increase the health care benefits that accrue to patients from any given level of spending.

Improvement of health care quality and safety. A comprehensive effort to improve the quality and safety of health care in New Mexico should be launched and sustained, with dramatically increased public funding.

Equitable funding. Reform should seek to reduce or eliminate cost-shifting across categories of insurance programs and payers, both public and private, and to make the distribution of financial burdens more equitable.

Simplified administration. Reform should include the development of standardized forms, minimization of complicated co-pays/ deductibles, and assurances of timely payment to providers. (2007)

Every New Mexico resident should have a comprehensive level of health care. The League favors a national health insurance plan, but until one is in place, the League supports expansion of state and federal plans. (2005.)(1991; rev. 1993, 2005, 2007)

#### **Drug Policy**

(Revised and adopted 2007)

Supports:

- Drug court programs;
- Treatment for all persons with drug addiction; and
- Syringe exchange programs in the State of New Mexico.

These programs should be prudently and appropriately funded. (2002; rev. 2003, 2007)

Believes that the serious problem of driving while intoxicated (DWI) demands legislative programs. The League supports:

- strong and equitable penalties for all offenders - including first offenders;
- strict and prompt enforcement;
- rehabilitation programs;
- public education programs;
- close cooperation between tribal, local and state officials; and
- adequate funding for enforcement, rehabilitation and education programs. (1984.)

#### **Education**

Supports:

- Educational programs that help ensure for all students optimal prospects for success throughout life;
- Measures to improve the preparation, recruitment, professional development, and retention of quality educators;
- The involvement by members of the community in efforts to improve their public schools; and
- The use of health and social service teams in the schools to identify and work with at-risk children, with referrals to appropriate community agencies when necessary.

With reference to educational programs, LWVNM supports a system of public education that prepares students to function within a changing interdependent society. Specific goals include:

- Develop to each student's highest potential the mastery of knowledge and skills needed for success in adult life, along with a broad understanding and appreciation of past history and prospects for the future;
- Cultivate each student's capacity to solve problems and make decisions;
- Provide opportunities for all students to develop their aesthetic awareness and creative abilities;
- Foster an awareness of the rights and privileges of membership in a democratic society, and acceptance of the responsibilities involved;
- Foster an understanding of basic economic principles and the need to manage resources for the benefit of both present and future generations;
- Provide the tools to make wise vocational choices, as well as an understanding of the importance of each individual's work in the local, national, and world economies;
- Contribute to establishing healthy lifestyles through promoting use of practices that lead to physical, mental and emotional well-being;
- Enhance the sense of community within the school, as a microcosm of the larger society, through standards of conduct that reflect a concern for the opinions, values, aspirations, and well-being of all. (1987; rev.1995)

### **Public School Finance**

Supports the continued use of a broadly based distribution formula to take into consideration differences in student needs, teacher experience and qualification, the number of schools and students in a district, level of education, capital outlay and transportation. (1973)

Supports the goals of the New Mexico Funding Formula as an effort to achieve equality and as an attempt to provide fair funding for every child, based on need, regardless of location. There should be periodic review and modifications to assure that the formula is faithful to its original intention. (1993)

Believes that local school districts should control the distribution of funds from the state. (1973; rev.1983,1993, 2002, 2007)

### **Economic Development**

Supports economic development with a focus on:

- Economic growth more than population growth;
- Good jobs with good wages;
- Quality of life;
- Consistency with protection of the environment and natural resources, particularly water; and
- Capitalizing on what is already here, such as existing businesses, technologies, and people (e.g., creativity).

Believes that the state should have a strong leadership role in planning, implementing and funding economic development.

This role should include:

- Supporting/assisting state regions in developing their own unique plans;
- Developing an excellent educational system;

- Expanding the use within the state of the capabilities of the universities and the labs; and
- Providing centralized expertise for specialized areas such as technology commercialization, international trade, intellectual property, and regulatory approvals. (2003)

### **Death Penalty**

Supports the repeal of the death penalty and the institution of a sentence of life in prison without parole as an alternative. Pending repeal, supports the implementation of the recommendations in the Final Report of the State Bar of New Mexico Task Force to Study the Administration of the Death Penalty in New Mexico (January 2004) including

- adequate defense funding for capital cases;
- a comprehensive proportionality study, including the development of a complete database of homicide prosecutions in New Mexico;
- higher standards for defense counsel at all stages of the proceedings;
- allowing opponents of the death penalty to serve on the jury for the first trial (to determine guilt or innocence) in a capital case. (2006)

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## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Believes that potential impacts on sustainability should be considered in formulating new positions and in advocating using current positions. Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the current generation without impairing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (2007)