



AAUW-NM Winter Roadrunner



Mission: to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.



Helena Whyte, Co-President



Anne Chase, Co-President

From our Presidents

Hello to all our New Mexico Branches and Members

Now that the elections are over, we need to evaluate what we need to do locally and statewide to further the AAUW missions. We need to look at how we are meeting the needs of our current members and what can we do to meet the needs of our local communities.

We want to invite everyone to our In-Person Leadership Team Meeting, LTM, in Santa Fe on the 9th of February. We will be holding it at Hotel Santa Fe again. They have been very welcoming to us in the past, and it is a lovely hotel. The cut-off date for reservations is January 9, 2025. Call Hotel Santa Fe at: 877-259-3409 for reservations.

The Registration Fee is \$50.00 which will cover a buffet breakfast and lunch. This is payable at the door. The meeting will begin at 9:00am and go through 4:00pm. Registration will begin at 8:30am. Please use the following link to register: <https://tinyurl.com/AAUWNMWinterLTM2025> Payment will be at the door by check or cash.

The main focus of the winter meeting is **Healthy Aging and Economic Security**. **Dori Ramsay** will tell us about The Memory Alliance, a statewide nonprofit group that works with the NM Department of Aging and Long-Term Services.

On **Monday, February 10**, following the Sunday LTM, is our **Advocacy Day**. Meredith Machen is organizing this and we urge those of you who can stay to attend. (see below)

This is going to be a very busy Legislative Session and Meredith would appreciate *several helpers to assist her in monitoring the Bills and Hearings*. They will be held over Zoom, so you do not have to be present in Santa Fe. See Meredith's column to see how to monitor the daily Legislative Session.

While the elections for new officers will take place at the Convention later in the year, we need to start thinking about who will fill the Co-President position with Anne for 2026-2028.

The other officers are planning to continue:
Nicole as Financial Chair for 2025-2027.
Kathie Davis will continue as Secretary through 2026.
Meredith Machen has been our Public Policy Chair for many years and has said she will continue 2025-2027.
We thank them for their support of AAUW!

Helena Whyte and Anne Chase
Co-Presidents



Dori Ramsay worked as an Executive Director for the YWCA of Orange County, and Director of Services for Battered Women before working for the City of Los Angeles. After retiring and traveling, her husband and mother developed Alzheimer's and she became a full time Caregiver. Dori is a founding Board Member of the Memory Care Alliance.



Marcela Díaz is the Founding Executive Director of Somos Un Pueblo Unido, a statewide immigrant-based organization that works to promote racial and worker justice in New Mexico. Through its community organizing, electoral engagement, litigation, and policy advocacy efforts, Somos has helped shape New Mexico's immigrant and worker's rights landscape for over two decades. Under Marcela's leadership, the organization has spearheaded several local and statewide laws and has won dozens of awards for its grassroots work.



Advocacy Day

Monday, February 10, 10 am-noon
NM Land Office, Morgan Hall, 310 Old
Santa Fe Trail

Healthy Aging and Economic Security

10:00 Stephanie Garcia Richard, State Land Commissioner: the Land Grant Permanent and Severance Funds and education and environmental sustainability

10:15 Emily Kaltenbach, NM Aging and Long-Term Services Cabinet Secretary: resources and services available through nmasing.gov and the strategic plan to address the needs of our growing elderly population

10:45 Othiamba Umi, AARP-NM State Policy Director
Paid Family Medical Leave legislation, other state priorities, national efforts to protect and strengthen Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and legal resources for seniors

11:15 Kristina Fisher, THINK NM Associate Director: Addressing NM's Health Care Provider Shortages legislative proposals to provide funding and incentives to recruit, train, hire, and retain providers.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) has advocated on educational, social, economic, and political issues since 1881. AAUW advances opportunities for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels. AAUW is a non-partisan organization does not support or oppose candidates or parties.

Contact AAUW State Public Policy Chair, Meredith Machen, Meredith.machen@gmail.com, 505-577-6337. For more information, see <https://aauw-nm.aauw.net/>.

[The Legislative Process, Simplified](#)

Regular sessions of NM's legislature are 60 days long in odd-numbered years, and legislation on virtually any topic can be introduced. Once a legislator decides that a current law needs revision or a new law is needed, s/he works confidentially with the Legislative Council Service to draft legislation. Sometimes the sponsor consults with individuals and organizations that want specific changes to existing law (state statutes and codes). Legislation may add, strike, amend, or confer new purpose(s) or restrictions. Only budget items and items on the governor's call can be heard in 30-day sessions, which are held in even-numbered years. The sponsor is the only one who can share the draft before it is pre-filed or filed officially and available for public scrutiny on <https://nmlegis.gov/>.



Introduction

The legislation is first vetted by the leadership of the Rules Committee in the sponsor's chamber and must be determined germane before committee assignments are made.

Readings

The number and title of the legislation must be introduced in the originating chamber before it gets its committee assignments. Most legislation is assigned two committees in each chamber. Having a third committee assignment can doom a piece of legislation, especially in short sessions. Legislation that is passed by its last committee assignment goes to the chamber leadership to be scheduled on the floor. The NM House and Senate have different processes to determine the order in which bills are heard and different floor debate rules and protocols.

Committee Hearings

Committees are staffed with analysts who have expertise and have researched the legislation thoroughly. The sponsor presents the legislation to the committee, which discusses the merits and shortcomings, and recommendations for changes are decided. If there is a request for appropriations, legislative analysts and personnel from the affected executive agencies provide comments in a Fiscal Impact Report (FIR), explaining the costs and consequences of enacting the legislation. Often the assigned committees discuss the legislation before the FIR is filed. The FIR is the best source for information because it summarizes the legislation, similar legislation on the same topic, possible conflicts or legal problems, and the projected budget implications. Minor changes can be made during the hearing and voted on immediately by the

committee. Major changes require the analysts and legislators to work with the Legislative Council Service, which drafts amendments, substitute language, or completely new versions. A subsequent hearing on major changes must be scheduled, often causing lengthy delays. The amended legislation is posted, showing the revisions in context. Votes to Pass or Do Not Pass or referrals to assigned or additional committees are then made. A vote to Table stalls the legislation in that committee where it usually dies or stays until lifted from the table for further discussion. Once acted upon, the legislation moves to the next committee assignment, where the process is repeated. Once all the committee assignments are complete, the bill goes to the chamber floor with a recommendation to either Pass or Do Not Pass.

Chamber Process

At this stage, the sponsor presents a synopsis of the legislation and its benefits and asks the chamber to support it. Even though committees have gone through lengthy debates and made most of the necessary modifications before legislation gets to the chamber floor, bills are often debated for hours and amended on the chamber floor. Floor amendments are often made to stall or stop the legislation from advancing in the second legislative chamber. Approved legislation goes to the other chamber, and the same process begins anew.

Passed Legislation

In NM, only a small fraction of the legislation filed each session gets approved by both chambers. NM's unpaid legislators frequently file bills to show their constituents that they are working for them. Standing and interim legislative committees craft and endorse bills that generally fare well. Most of the other legislation filed by individual legislators is not produced through coordinated efforts even within a party, so conflicting as well as similar legislation is often filed on the same subject. In contrast, good legislation is generally the result of collaboration, attracting many co-sponsors to sign on and promote. Experienced legislators recognize that good bills usually take several sessions before they pass and get signed by the governor. Vetoes are not uncommon. Bills not acted upon by the governor by the indicated date are called pocket vetoes. The governor usually explains veto decisions, and Constitutional amendment resolutions that are passed by both chambers do not require gubernatorial approval. They go directly on the ballot in the next general election, where voters decide their fate.

See AAUW-NM's Public Policy Priorities, our Guide to the New Mexico Legislature's website, and other documents at

<https://aauw-nm.aauw.net/publicpolicy/aauw-nm-advocacy-team/>

For AAUW National Advocacy Information, see <https://aauw-nm.aauw.net/public-policyresources/>

Questions? Comments? Contact Meredith Machen, State Public Policy Chair, at meredith.machen@gmail.com, 505 577-6337.

1/11/25

2025 Legislative Session

January 2 - January 17: Legislation may be pre-filed

January 21: Opening day

February 20: Deadline for introductions

March 22: Session ends

April 11: Legislation not acted upon by the governor is pocket vetoed

June 20: Effective date of legislation, not a general appropriation bill or a bill carrying an emergency clause or other specified date

Note: **AAUW NM Public Policy Priorities 2023-2025 are listed below, at the end of the newsletter.**



AAUW NM Public Policy 2025

AAUW national has produced some post-election materials to help us remain positive about our power to work together to advance our shared policy priorities. I recommend you watch the recording of the recent webinar on the outlook of economic security issues in the 119th Congress, "**Securing Our Future**" available at aauw.org. Please see other guidance, resources, and action alerts on the

website also. We are lucky to be in New Mexico where we have enacted so many laws to protect civil rights in general, especially women's and LGBTQ rights. Every one of us will be affected by the decisions of the incoming administration, especially if the plans laid out in Agenda 47 and Project 2025 come to pass. For the foreseeable future, state laws will be increasingly important in protecting the rights of residents, but they only go so far. Our undocumented residents are most at risk, given the plans for mass deportations. NM is so heavily dependent on federal dollars, that we will not be able to cover our essential services in education, healthcare, and more without those federal dollars. In 2021, NM was one of the three states that received the highest rates of federal funding per person. Our Medicaid enrollment is 38.3 % compared to the national average of 23.6 percent.

Education

Education has been the keystone of our nation's democracy since our colonial days and the core mission of AAUW since our organization was founded in 1881. While it will take an act of Congress to eliminate the US Department of Education entirely, there are plans to reduce its funding and functions immediately. Legislation is already being drafted to unwind regulations. New Mexico puts a higher percentage of state dollars into public education than many other states, but our high poverty rate and other complex factors cause us to rely on programs and services that are paid for by federal dollars. Fortunately, our state constitution requires non-denominational public education be available to all students. NM, like many other states includes the Blaine amendment in the constitution, which requires the state to provide a free, sufficient, and equal education to all students. Perhaps legislators in these states will join us in pushing back against federal education spending cuts.

Education, which accounts for over half of our state budget, will again take center stage. As a state, we must focus on improving academic outcomes and fulfill the Yazzie-Martinez v NM court orders to comply with our constitutional mandate. The judge reiterated that NM must do "whatever it takes, whatever it costs" to address deficiencies. Since 2018, we have had more than five PED secretaries, but we still have not seen significant improvements or even a strategic plan. Recently legislators on the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) have asked staff to draft the plan. The LESC is now headed by John Sena who has just been hired as director after serving as deputy director and then interim director. Some legislation has been vetted for committee endorsement on January 21, the morning of the opening of session at noon with the governor's speech. The LESC has been studying ways to incorporate STEM in the curriculum for two years now as a way to engage students and improve academic outcomes. This initiative may well become part of the state plan, though it will be very expensive and complicated to implement. The best scenario is if the Legislative Finance Committee also votes to include the LESC's proposed budget for pre-K-12 in House bill 2. HB 2, the legislature's proposed budget, always differs from the governor's proposed budget, which includes the requests from all of the state agencies that the governor has approved.

Senator George Munoz, chair of the very powerful Senate Finance Committee, has warned state agencies that they need to be much more frugal than they have been thus far in their requests. The House must pass a budget and send it to the Senate by mid-session for modifications before returning it to the House for reconciliation and final passage. Passing a balanced budget for the governor's approval (with line-item vetoes expected) is absolutely mandatory. Everything else the legislature does is optional. We continue to have a very healthy budget surplus thanks in large part to record gas and oil revenues. How we will spend the rest of the budget and the laws we send to the governor will take up the remainder of the session.

Other than requiring a sufficient public education system, our state constitution requires little else besides a governor, secretary of state, attorney general, legislature, and judicial system. Our state universities are mentioned in our constitution, but much of our higher education system is optional. No programs are guaranteed unless they are designated in statute. The Land Grant Permanent Fund only covers a few entities besides the public schools. Higher ed has been underfunded for many years but may have to wait again because of other priorities. Colleges have suffered budget cuts that resulted in closing programs and laying off faculty. Higher ed salaries have not been increased in many years and are ripe for attention in 2025. The situation is exacerbated by all of the public education salary increases, resulting in a beginning teacher with a bachelor's degree

earning more than a college faculty member with a doctorate and decades of experience. There was an attempt to bring higher education policy under the purview of the LESC which was opposed by the universities and some colleges, which operate independently except for branch colleges. Colorado, California, and many other states benefit from having systems. This means that each of the colleges and universities must vie for itself in the budget process. NM is the state different. We are also the only state without a state school board.

The LESC staff works year-round and meets throughout the interim with legislators. This bipartisan committee is the closest thing NM has to having a state school board. Though several attempts have been made over the years, legislators have not approved a constitutional amendment resolution asking voters to approve transforming the Public Education Commission into a state school board. Perhaps we will see another attempt this session, which we will support. Higher ed does not have the clout that public ed does, but we will support increases aligned with our priorities, including bills calling for funding for health careers and other STEM programs. The LESC has teacher training and dual credit programs in its purview as well as researching best practices for PED to implement, preparing legislation for possible endorsement, and preparing fiscal and policy analysis of every education bill before it can be heard in committee. We expect the House Education Committee to meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning and Senate Education to meet on Tuesday and Thursday. I need someone to help me cover these committees. Lynn Heffron cannot testify on education legislation now that she is a school board member. I will gladly mentor and train someone to assist with or take over this important responsibility so that I can cover other legislation. As usual, I will read all of the bills and fiscal impact reports and determine and/or advise whether we should support, oppose, or stay silent. When I am not clear about where we should stand, I will consult with other members of the Advocacy Team or, when necessary, members of the Leadership Team. We sorely miss the assistance of Sonya Berg and Sylvia Fink, who have moved to other states. Please contact me to find out more about what is involved if you are interested. Fortunately, no one needs to go to Education committees in person in order to be treated equally to those in the room. Testifying remotely is a vast improvement over sitting for hours and hours waiting for a bill to be heard, though I still like to be there in person as much as possible.

Healthcare

Second to education, my biggest worry is about healthcare. We will again advocate for raising alcohol taxes, which have not been raised since 1993. Alcohol is implicated in most violent crimes, suicides, domestic violence, and traffic accidents. It is also responsible for major health problems. The Alcohol Harms Alleviation (AHA) coalition has been meeting monthly throughout the interim and has presented legislation in several committees with warmer reception this time around. Raising the alcohol tax has been proven to reduce consumption and the harms caused by alcohol abuse. The funds generated need to be earmarked for prevention and treatment and not go into the general fund.

We will also support legislation that will help us recruit, train, and retain more healthcare providers. We will hear more about THINK New Mexico's proposals on Advocacy Day, February 10.

Modernizing Our Legislature

NM has elected a majority of women to serve in our legislature, setting a national record as the state with the highest percentage of female legislators in the country. There is much more consensus among women in favor of our policy priorities, but we still have much advocacy work ahead to get our legislation passed and signed. The huge uncertainty about the availability of federal funds for education and healthcare are likely to overshadow all of the other legislative decisions. We will again support a constitutional amendment resolution calling for a commission to determine salaries for our legislators. We cannot continue to be the only state in the nation that doesn't pay its legislators who work incredibly hard each session and throughout the year on interim committees and serving constituents.

Paid Family Medical Leave

The coalition AAUW serves on has been meeting monthly or more throughout the interim and will soon start meeting weekly, then daily during the session. For information about

PFML, which has improved over the past four years, please go to nmpfml.org. Input from advocates as well as opponents, businesses, the Department of Workforce Solutions (which will manage the program) has been incorporated to strengthen the legislation and implementation logistics. The sponsors of the 2025 legislation are Reps. Serrato and Chandler and Sen. Stewart. The chambers of commerce and hospitality industry are still opposed. Our female-majority legislature includes fewer legislators who voted against the 2024 version of the bill, but it is going to take a lot of lobbying to get the bill passed. PFML failed in the House in the final moments of session by just two votes, but there are so many new legislators coming in, it is a bit unpredictable. Voters by a wide margin approve of this benefits program, which is designed to support new parents and qualifying individuals with personal or close family emergencies. Statutes can change and often do, so the solvency of the fund will determine whether the system will need to be modified after the initial implementation period.

Public Safety

Another major focus of the session will be improving public safety and reducing crime. In addition to a strong education and healthcare system, social services, prevention and treatment programs make our communities safer. We support more funding for behavioral health including constructing and staffing facilities. We do not support putting more people in jail for longer and harsher sentences. We know that people who suffer from mental illness and substance abuse need treatment rather than prison. The legislature's interim Health and Human Services Committee has prioritized behavioral health services in 2025 and worked on interstate compacts and other incentives to help with the provider shortage.

The interim Courts, Corrections, and Justice Committee has worked for months considering gun safety and the crime legislation. When the governor asked lawmakers to pass her crime legislation in a special session this summer, this exemplary joint committee promised to look deeply into our state's problems and contextual issues as well as national data and expertise as well as legislation enacted in other states. Most members prefer alternatives to incarceration rather than stiffer sentences, especially when it comes to juvenile crime. Among the gun safety bills we will again support is strengthening our ERPO-Extreme Risk Protection Order law. We have a good law that is not being implemented widely when applicable because law enforcement officers are reluctant to remove firearms from those people who are threatening violence to partners, family members, or themselves. We will again advocate for outlawing assault weapons and restricting the sale of inexpensive apparatuses that easily convert handguns so that they function in an equivalent manner to assault weapons. Those two bills will be harder to pass restricting gun sales to individuals under the age of 21. We have an incongruous loophole in our laws allowing certain guns to be sold to those under 21 that Second Amendment advocates will adamantly defend even though incidents of gun violence among youth have increased every year. NM continues to have one of the highest rates of gun-related deaths and injuries in the nation.

Immigration

We can expect to hear some legislation concerning immigration policies. Federal pre-emption and threats of mass deportations are terrifying many of our students and their families. New Mexico depends on immigrant workers in our oil fields, hospitality, agriculture, and construction, so we are hoping that Congress will authorize select businesses and industries to hire eligible individuals with expedited federal work permits. Already Vermont and other states have figured out how to get non-residents temporary work permits for seasonal labor. The bill we supported last session calling for Dignity Not Detention is being modified completely now that ICE is already contracting with private detention facilities and prisons directly rather than going through local government contracts

Housing

We will again advocate for increasing the Housing Trust Fund to address our growing problem of homelessness, which is extremely difficult to solve. Tax credits or other incentives for affordable housing construction are likely to be included in the omnibus tax bill the Senate has been working on.

Environment

We appreciate the leadership of the Sierra Club and other dedicated organizations to do



Note from your Editor:

The following articles are submitted by Branch representatives for your reading enjoyment and maybe to get ideas for your Branch to adopt. This is your chance to showcase your Branch. Please submit an article next RR cycle.

Judy McGuire
judymcguire2@gmail.com
Roadrunner Editor

Branch News

Albuquerque

Our October Branch meeting was titled “**Know your Ballot: The 2024 Election**” and featured Starlyn Brown and Karen Wentworth, President and first Co-Vice President, respectively, of the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. They reviewed, discussed and answered questions regarding the League of Women Voters non-partisan Voting Guide released for this year’s election. This included coverage of the four New Mexico constitutional amendments, numerous state and county bond questions and several proposed mills levies. Meeting attendees received a hard copy of the voting guide and participated in a lively Q&A followed the presentation.

"We are sad to report that Honorary Life member and former president **Marilyn Dunn** of the Albuquerque Branch passed away in October 2024. We are also saddened to share that **Miriam Friedman**, Honorary Life member of the Albuquerque branch passed away this past in summer in July 2024."

Our November 2nd meeting was arranged by council member, Mary Moskal, and featured two speakers on the topic “**Focus on the Homeless in Albuquerque**”: one from the City of Albuquerque and one from the non-profit, Family Promise of Albuquerque. Together, they represented two major efforts working at the frontlines of helping and empowering the homeless population of Albuquerque. One speaker was Jennifer McDonald, the new Gateway Operations Officer for the Department of Health, Housing, and Homelessness at the City of Albuquerque. She oversees operations at Gateway Center, Gateway West, Family Gateway, and will also oversee Young Adult Housing Navigation, which will open in the next year. Our other speaker was Kaleen Kalama who is a Case Manager at Family Promise of Albuquerque. Family Promise is a non-profit organization that assists families who are at risk for homelessness, currently experiencing homelessness or recently exiting homelessness. Their services feature a very high level of contact, wrap around resources and continued follow up with the families and they have a very high success rate with families remaining housed and on a new path.

The Albuquerque Branch STEM Taskforce recently hosted this year’s **Tech Trek New Mexico camper alumnae reunion** with the event being held on November 10th at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque. Fifty alumnae ranging from 8th to 12th grade attended from around the state. Please see the separate article on the reunion for more details.

Claudia Poglitsch
AAUW Albuquerque Branch Council

Carlsbad

In October, we held our **Annual Wine and Tapas Fundraiser** at Milton’s Brewing. We requested a donation at the door, and based on the donation, they received a drink ticket(s) and a door prize ticket(s). We had about 15 different auction items, all donated by members, and a door prize. We had a local musician provide music and had light finger foods. This was the first year we held it at Milton’s, and even though we did not get the big crowd we expected, it was still a successful event, and we reached our goal. We also spent time discussing how to improve it for next year.

On November 1, we had our **Exploring the Possibilities STEM event**. We invited 50 girls, 25 from each middle school in Carlsbad, to attend this event at Southeast New Mexico College. We had 12 different workshops taught by women scientists from Los

Alamos National Laboratories, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Bureau of Land Management, Carlsbad Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Tucson Audubon Society. We had many AAUW members volunteer for the event, and they helped make the event successful. We were fortunate to receive donations from many businesses around town, but our biggest contributors were Edgewater Federal Solutions, who purchased lunch for everyone, LATA, who purchased breakfast and coffee for the volunteers, and Edward Jones, who gave a check. We also had a guest speaker from Artesia General Hospital to speak about the medical field. The Carlsbad Current-Argus also wrote a great article about the event. You can check out our Facebook page for pictures. We are looking at doing this event twice a year, one for each middle school, to reach more girls.



In December, we look forward to our **Holiday Party**. Mary Sandford is our host for this event. This is a member only event, we will have finger foods, an ornament exchange, and will be collecting toys for donation and will have a raffle. We also look forward to the many programs we have planned for the spring.

With our growing branch, we hope to get more active in the community. Many members have expressed new ideas, and we look forward to growing not only in numbers but also in the activities we have. We continue to have our monthly meetings, monthly book group, and monthly lunch bunch. If you haven't already, be sure to check out our Facebook page, AAUW Carlsbad. We have been working to post more often.

Submitted by:
Cassie Marrs
Carlsbad Branch President

Santa Fe

On November 9th our Branch enjoyed a general discussion of the book **THE WOMEN** by **Kristen Hannah**. It is a fictional story about a young woman who joins the Army to go to Vietnam as a nurse during the Vietnam War. Our lively discussion was led by Branch member Suzanne Davis, who joined the Army to go to Vietnam in the 60s.

Next, we will be attending the annual **Santa Fe Concert Band Holiday Concert** on December 2nd at the Lensic Theater after we first dine together at Il Vicino.

And once again the Santa Fe Branch looks forward to hosting the New Mexico Leadership Team Meeting on Sunday, February 9, 2025 at the Hotel Santa Fe. Discounted room rates are offered until the end of December 2024. Please book now as rooms are limited.

Advocacy Day will follow on Monday, February 10, and is led by AAUW NM Public Policy Chair and SF member **Meredith Machen**. More details concerning both events will follow later in announcements and emails.

We are happy to announce that on Wednesday, February 26, we will have noted author **Anne Hillerman speaking to us about her body of work and her newest book,**

Shadow of the Solstice, which will be out in April 2025. Friends and family are invited to join us. Refreshments will be served, and RSVPs requested. The location is at Estancia Primera Clubhouse here in Santa Fe.

We are also planning to host a reunion of Tech Trek alumna from the Santa Fe area in early April. Details of this first-time event are underway. We were pleased to see five girls from SF recently attend the Albuquerque TT reunion.

Lynn Heffron
Co-President, Santa Fe Branch

Online Branch

A webinar generated by AAUW-CA that was distributed to AAUW NM leadership by Meredith Machen (AAUW NM Public Policy Chair) was shared with online branch members by email on October 28th before the general election. Mary Sandford, the online branch's Secretary and Communications Officer sent the webinar titled, "**Project 2025 and How it Would Impact AAUW Policy Priorities**". Please contact Meredith Machen at meredith.machen@gmail.com if you would like to receive a copy of the webinar.

Another item shared with our online branch prior to our first zoom meeting was the announcement and registration information for "**The Women's Health Summit**" sponsored by the NM Commission on the Status of Women that was held on November 8-9, 2024 at the Isleta Resort & Casino, Albuquerque. This year's summit focused on women's healthcare, including expanding access, women's mental health, community-driven models of care, social determinants of health, and maternal mortality issues in our state. Online branch members Helena Whyte, Cheri Burch and Claudia Poglitsch registered for the summit and staffed a table representing AAUW-NM that included information sheets on health measures for women that AAUW supports and also included information about the general mission of AAUW, our branches across the state and how to become an AAUW member.

Participation at this year's New Mexico Women's Health Summit followed an informative zoom meeting the NM Online Branch had last spring with Jennifer Getz, the Executive Director of the NM Commission on the Status of Women. You can read more about the commission and its mission at <https://nmcsw.org>.

The Online Branch met via zoom at 4 pm on Sunday, November 17, 2024. Branch member Nina Thayer arranged the program entitled, "**Election 2024 in NM: Path Forward for the 2025 NM Legislature**." with presenters Meredith Machen, AAUW-NM Public Policy Chair, and NM Representative Christine Chandler of District 43, which encompasses all of Los Alamos County and areas in Sandoval and Santa Fe counties.

Meredith Machen reviewed and answered questions about statewide election results, including State Constitutional Amendments and Bonds. Representative Chandler who sits on the House Judiciary Committee and has been a representative for six years, reported that her new slate of representative colleagues are conscientious and also diverse. Of forty-four members of her caucus, there are only two white men. Also, women now outnumber men in the NM legislature, which is the only unpaid legislative body in the country. Representative Chandler named several issues that she felt would be addressed in the 2025 legislative session: public safety/behavioral health, gun safety, tweaks to DUI laws, penalty enhancements, criminal competency, problems with CYFD, paid family and medical leave and legislative modernization. There is also the possibility of an AI bill to eliminate bias and a bill to address the NM anti-donation clause; however, these may require more time. Rep. Chandler answered many questions before leaving the meeting.

February 16th or 23rd, 2025 were proposed for our next zoom meeting date with a presentation that will be announced soon.

Claudia Poglitsch
President, Online Branch

Strengthening Education at All Levels

1. Ensuring quality programs through funding, professional training, and student support.
2. Promoting access to both academic programs and personal development.
3. Enhancing career opportunities through training, scholarships, and fellowships.

Improving Economic Security and Healthy Lifestyles

1. Supporting funding for affordable housing, social services, quality childcare, and food.
2. Advocating for affordable, accessible healthcare, reproductive rights, and behavioral health.
3. Promoting fair economic policies, including student loan debt relief, tax credits, and pay equity.
4. Addressing income stress and retirement security.

Fostering Quality Work Experiences

1. Promoting improved compensation and professional advancement opportunities.
2. Advocating for Paid Family and Medical Leave and flexible, family-friendly work conditions.

Promoting Safe, Just, Sustainable Communities

1. Advancing gender equity and sexism; addressing gun violence; reducing trauma and domestic abuse; treating alcohol and substance abuse.
2. Advocating for social justice and civil rights.
3. Protecting our environment and natural resources.

Improving Government Accountability and Access

1. Modernizing legislative practices; advocating for compensation to ensure diverse representation.
2. Promoting collaborative problem-solving and reducing partisanship.
3. Fostering respectful dialogue about critical issues.
4. Protecting voting rights and fair elections.
5. Embracing inclusive practices and policies.

For further information, visit [AAUW-New Mexico](#). Meredith Machen, AAUW-NM Public Policy Chair, meredith.machen@gmail.com, 505 577-6337

Co-President:

Anne Chase
a.chase@gmail.com

Co-President

Helena Whyte
mozden08@aol.com

Finance Chair

Nicole Olsson-Dial
naolssondial@gmail.com

Secretary

Kathie Davis
kadkathryn@gmail.com

Public Policy Chair

Meredith Machen
meredith.machen@gmail.com

Past President

Lynn Heffron
lgheffron@gmail.com

AAUW

Founded in 1923

Mission:

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy

AAUW-NM Focus:

"Empowering Women to change their lives"

AAUW NM

AAUW

The *Roadrunner* is a quarterly publication of AAUW NM
Editor: Judy Mcguire judymcguire2@gmail.com

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