

Democratic:
House & Senate Candidates

Assuming that the economy is not going to grow significantly in the next 2-3 years – and that reducing fraud, waste, and abuse will not provide any significant savings -- how would you provide funding to keep New Mexico education from being the worst in the nation?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- As a committed educator and committee member of House Education and the Legislative Education Study Committee, I don't appreciate what this question implies. New Mexico teachers and educators are passionate committed professionals that work tirelessly to educate the children of our state. Money can't be thrown at public education to see what sticks and what doesn't. As a state, we invest hundreds of millions of dollars that are distributed to the school districts and charter schools in the state. Local decisions are then made by school boards and governing boards as to how that funding is spent based on local needs. That stated, there are many factors that go into educating our children and funding is just one of them. We have to have certified teachers in all NM classrooms, educational materials have to be culturally and linguistically relevant, school buildings must be in good shape, connectivity must be available, transportation must be available and investment from parents, families and the community is a must. To just throw money at education in order "to keep New Mexico education from being the worst in the nation" is not going to be the solution. If you have lived here long enough, you would know that NM is not a "one size fits all" state.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- First I agree with the premise that we cannot realistically expect to fund our government by reducing fraud, waste and abuse. This ignores the fact that primary and higher education represent approximately 60% of our general fund spending. Our current budget assumed oil prices at \$51/barrel and today that price is under \$20/barrel. We must rely on the Land Grant Permanent Fund to fund education given the budget crisis which confronts us. We must also eliminate unproductive tax breaks to select businesses and restore corporate tax rates. I voted against the most recent

cuts to corporate taxes though those cuts were passed.

Melissa Ontiveros- It is important that we explore and analyze reforms to fund public education as we think about limiting the exposure of public education funding to unstable returns on oil and gas.

Legislatures should examine raising property, sales or income tax and increase funding from the lottery.

-I would explore and support grant opportunities to fund programs such as early education, literacy, and/or STEM programs.

-Legalizing recreational marijuana would be another way to fund education. With a clear budget and plan on how much funding would go towards education and educational programs. For instance, Colorado, Nevada and Oregon include language in state ballot initiatives to ensure a portion of tax revenue is used in education. "In 2018 Colorado collected roughly \$245 million for early literacy grants, \$40 million for school capital outlay and \$30 million to the state Public School Fund". Revenue from marijuana can be used to fund public health initiatives such as school-based health centers, school and social workers (in every school).

-I would work with US Representatives to increase money for rural schools, special education programs, and early education.

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- I believe it is important to look at alternative forms of revenue. Supporting and taking care of our children is vital and should be a priority. The Land Grant Permanent Fund is a significant source of support from early education to post-secondary. If we put our kids first, we will see a lower High school dropout rate, increase in higher education and a bigger educator workforce in years to come.

John A. Smith- New Mexico education funding is not 50th in the nation. It is approaching midpoint nationally. 47% of funding goes to public education and approx. 13% goes to higher education. New Mexico education retirement is not actuarial sound and this needs to be corrected, it is billions of dollars short. Tax reform needs to be more than a buzz word and needs to have stabilize revenues to fund education and government. Education

funding has increased but enrollment has decreased statewide.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- The problem with trying to improve our education funding is that we have to play catch up for years of ignoring the importance of supporting our schools. If we had used a portion of the permanent fund much sooner for our educational needs, it would have been an investment in the future of our children rather than being affected by the stock market and constantly playing catchup. I feel funding our education system should be a priority in the legislature and implementing equitable disbursements from revenue sources. Plus, diversifying our revenue streams is crucial if we are to weather downturns in the market.

Mary Kay Papen- I have always made Education a priority. We have to keep it front and center.

Tracy L. Perry- The time is now to be bold on bringing new revenue to New Mexico. We have so much potential for growth in multiple industries that include alternative energy, agriculture, marijuana legalization, aerospace and defense, distribution and transportation, manufacturing, digital media and film, and administrative and federal government support. We need to invest in these industries so we can provide improved diversification in revenue. Long term, we need to create a workforce through education that is attractive to business and prioritize tax reform.

Do you support or oppose private prisons and detention facilities?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- Oppose

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- I oppose privatization of the criminal justice system including prisons and detention facilities and in 20 years have not supported privatization.

Melissa Ontiveros- I oppose private prisons and detention facilities

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- I oppose private prisons and detention facilities. The state has no true oversight to make

sure that our children who are incarcerated are not cared for. Health is a priority.

John A. Smith- The private prison issue was back in the Gary Johnson administration and that has not been a good experience for the state. The private prison issue was when states were trying to build them out as a solution to crime. The State of New Mexico needs to be discussing prison reform.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- I oppose private prisons and detention facilities as they are nothing but money generators for those corporations who own them or run them. This is done at the expense of people of color and a lower socioeconomic class that have been targeted by law enforcement for petty misdemeanors rather than legitimate crimes. If we are to have prisons in our state, they should be regulated by the state and not run according to profit margins.

Mary Kay Papen- The State of New Mexico should provide the detention facilities needed for the State.

Tracy L. Perry- I completely oppose private prisons, and I hope that every other Democrat in this race does as well. Not only do I oppose them because of the impact on public services, but they can disproportionately effect people of colors and underserved communities. I have done my best to work with constituent offices in Congress and in New Mexico to sure that ICE raids don't tear families apart – something that private prisons exacerbate.

Realizing that there are many national and state level issues right now, what would you say is the most important issue or challenge related to your particular district?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- We have many needs in our communities ranging from infrastructure to commercial growth and job development. HD 34 for the most part is agricultural in nature where water issues remain at the top of the list. The communities of HD 34 are also in need of infrastructure, this also includes quality of life infrastructure such as community centers, broadband, parks and athletic fields. That said, selecting a singular issue to identify as

the most important or challenging would be doing a disservice to the people of HD 34.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- Assuring the delivery of healthcare resources into southern Dona Ana County such as COVID19 testing and protective PPE. Currently a number of law enforcement officers in Sunland Park are quarantined. It is essential first responders remain healthy and available to serve, and that residents can access information, testing and healthcare.

Melissa Ontiveros- If you are asking about the issues and challenges due to the COVID-19 - the people who live in Sunland Park, Anthony, Chaparral are faced with ECONOMIC CRISIS (loss of jobs, unable to get unemployment, immigrants). The people who live in these areas are considered to live in very low SES areas or live in poverty and now face losing their homes, utilities turned off or can't afford to buy food or essential products. In Las Cruces the economic crisis is a challenge due to lose of jobs and decrease in employment hours. -However, If you are asking about what is important (in general/not related to COVID-19) voters who live in Sunland Park, Anthony, Chaparral, and Mesquite they would say infrastructure. In Las Cruces there are two distinct areas: the most important issue would be safety in the Missouri/Telshor area; the more affluent neighborhoods vary in their response to what they find most important or a challenge.

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- Making sure education is fully funded at a time we cannot do cuts to programs that will hurt our kids and working family. During the last recession the legislation cut state employees/teachers funding which sent NM backwards. We have a rainy-day fund and we need to use it because it is pouring outside.

John A. Smith- The most important issue is to get the virus issue behind us and then we have to get people back to work.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing more and more of the disparities with access to healthcare. Since District 38

contains many rural communities and with scarce economic opportunities, residents of these areas are having to work while taking risks for themselves and their families. Furthermore, recruiting and being able to pay more specialists and doctors, not only in the city but the rural parts of the community, is critical to providing much needed health care. And, to make sure their pay is equal to that in other parts of the state. This would include providing more funding and resources to La Clinica de Familia, the Amador Health Center, and the Ben Archer clinics.

Although this is a complicated issue, with many variables that affect positive outcomes, providing much needed transportation so residents can access healthcare, jobs, and educational opportunities is critical. In addition to supporting those initiatives, we also must provide support and resources for locally owned businesses, entrepreneurs, and farmers. It's difficult to say there is just one issue when so many of them are intertwined and dependent on one another in order to see improvement. But, as we are seeing because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the drop-in oil and gas revenues, the need to diversify our economy by legalizing cannabis and adopting more wind and solar to offset the decrease is imperative.

Mary Kay Papen- Unemployment and small business is of great concern to me and the people in my District. Healthcare is also a challenge in my District.

Tracy L. Perry- We have several in District 38 that require immediate attention. The Governor recently vetoed some infrastructure bills and capital outlay requests due to declining oil revenues. Roads and infrastructure is an issue that is critical to District 38 as it covers the heart of Las Cruces as well as rural areas going all the way down near to the border. Colonias in my district as well as other rural areas rely on infrastructure money, and we need to address this to make sure we don't fall behind.

-NMSU, DACC, and Las Cruces High also falls within District 38, and we are home to a lot of students. High Schools and Universities have different challenges, but it will be key to address the issue to make sure that students have the resources they need to thrive, even in summertime where many of

them rely on summer programs and school. I look forward to working with the Governor, State Legislature, and all local branches of Government to make sure that we make the right investments into the people that need it the most.

In light of the downturn in oil/gas revenues, what recommendations would you make going into a special session?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- We don't know what the impact is or will be. It wouldn't be prudent and responsible to make specific comments or recommendations based on speculation at this moment. I anticipate that we will have more of a solid idea as the session looms closer.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- We will confront unprecedented demands on our budget after the 40% of our budget, which relies on oil revenue, must be slashed. Likewise declines in gross receipts taxes on spending, and income taxes, will have terribly impacted our revenues. We will need to come together and agree to utilize the Land Grant Permanent Fund for allowable uses in funding education and allow for a larger distribution percent as possibly high as 6.5%, or as needed to avoid cuts to public education. Fortunately, we retained reserves this past session at over 20% which will help carry us through the next fiscal year beginning in July. We will have to work closely with our federal delegation to secure federal assistance on Medicaid to assure health insurance and care.

Melissa Ontiveros- We cannot depend on gas and oil as sustainable funding sources for New Mexico. "Oil and gas wells do not produce at a constant rate. Production rates within the state can only be sustained through ongoing exploration and drilling programs". If we want to grow NM's economy, we cannot keep postponing legalizing recreational marijuana. We have resources and the evidence we need to move forward with a bill that will diversify economic growth, create jobs for all people (including those who are systematically excluded by equal access to jobs and economic opportunity), and reduce astronomical law enforcement costs.

-Potential sales tax benefits for legalizing marijuana would not only put New Mexico in the fore run for economic development and job creation

but could help pay for costly education reforms, re-establishing our behavioral health system, and provide resources to prevention and rehabilitation in tobacco, drugs and alcohol programs. -Why stall when we can start making marijuana use safer through required testing, labeling, and regulations that safeguard users and distributors.

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- Considering our current issues with Covid-19. We need alternative means to oil/gas revenues. Knowing that a large portion of our revenue comes from oil and gas. The legislature should have fixed this after the last recession. Since they did not we will have to keep our programs that assist our children, families, and small businesses funded through our permanent fund until we diversify our economy.

John A. Smith- The special session should address 3 areas not necessarily in order: 1) How is the state going to pay its bills. 2) Make certain health care is funded to address the current virus issues. 3) How to restart the economy at the local government level. All three of these issues need to maximize monies from the federal stimulus.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- This is a complicated issue because first and foremost, we need to be aware of the safety of our legislators and staff. The COVID-19 pandemic really illustrates the need for remote meeting and voting and having the forethought to bring the New Mexico Legislature into the modern technological era. Also, we need to look at what is in the state constitution and handbook to see what procedures are in place regarding the re-calculating of capital outlay projects. That said, I would propose that each legislator re-calculate their capital outlay projects, disclose that information to their constituents, and be transparent in their decision making.

Mary Kay Papen- The State of New Mexico during 2020 is in a safe place because of our previous fiscal responsibility. However, because of our economic downturn in the State, in the year 2021 difficult decisions will have to be made. The tax committees of the NM Legislature should be looking to come up with a sensible comprehensive plan that looks at all options.

Tracy L. Perry- As I mentioned previously, we need to look at finding new revenues. I would support putting marijuana legalization on the docket as well as incentives to solar and wind jobs. Furthermore, we need to figure out how to get small businesses back on track. While we can't lift regulations that would hurt the environment, I do believe we can get creative by allowing for expanded services including having more liquor licenses for restaurants and providing businesses with grants to make sure they remain operational. At this point, all ideas should be on the table.

What exemptions would you eliminate; what taxes would you raise; what specific programs or areas would you cut?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- I will answer this question in different parts:
1) Without knowing which exemptions and for who/what the questions is referring to, I cannot provide specific examples.
2) Taxes were raised during the 2019 session on high wage earners and on tobacco to name two specific increases.
3) Cuts in any program or area will have consequences that will impact all New Mexicans. This means that any reductions must consider the impact that it will have in the larger picture. That said, I personally would not target or cut any program and or area in particular, but I will consider across the board reductions in order to mitigate negative impacts on New Mexicans and the people of HD 34 in particular.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- Again I would restore corporate tax rates which were cut over my opposition during the Martinez administration. We must restore progressive tax policies and brackets. NM must spend less on incarceration and in particular for drug offenses. I passed the law decriminalizing marijuana in NM so that we not waste resources prosecuting personal drug use and not incarcerating people for personal use drug offenses.

Melissa Ontiveros- Inequities go beyond money. Core services, which make a huge difference in instructional quality and student performance, are systematically unavailable to students in low-income schools relative to students in higher-income schools. It is

important that school funding go beyond raw numbers and we evaluate whether students have equitable access to the resources needed for success, including early childhood education, quality teachers, and exposure to challenging curriculum.

-Under the current administration, education funding to districts through the state equalization formula have been placed “above the line” – meaning they are controlled locally, without political interference and assuring equity and equality in for school districts.

- Increase property tax

- increase revenue from income tax by reducing certain exclusions, such as preferential treatment of capital gains, or limiting the amount of deductions that taxpayers can claim

- broaden sales tax to items subject only to an excise tax: cigarettes, alcohol, and gas.

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- I do not support tax breaks for the top 3%, Remove the tax cap on out of state second homeowners, I want to make sure internet sales is taxed to protect our local mom and pop shops. I do support small businesses.

John A. Smith- The shutdown of retail and restaurants is devastating local government revenues and will challenge sustained law enforcement and emergency services. Local governments need to be included in the discussion. All exemptions should be on the table and if not removed or eliminated a sustained employment should be required of the beneficiary of the exemption.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- Before making sweeping changes in our tax system, it is important to review what taxes are practical and fair and what taxes are unnecessary and burdensome. I have heard from many individuals, sole proprietors, who are financially slammed because of the Gross Receipts Tax. I would want to explore the history of that tax and revisit its viability. What seems to be a common practice in cities across the state is to offer large tax incentives to out of town companies and stores and yet not offer equitable tax incentives to already established or locally owned businesses. This should be an economic

generator rather than a punishment for entrepreneurship and small businesses. On any of the taxes and exemptions, there must be a mandatory sunset clause in place to provide the opportunity to re-evaluate the efficacy of any tax that is affecting businesses and individuals.

Mary Kay Papen- I would review what the tax committee brings to the table. My record reflects my responsible, prudent and fair fiscal responsibility.

Tracy L. Perry- We need to continue to work towards a more progressive tax system. The Legislature did a good job on beginning this process in 2019, but there are still certain areas that we can improve upon including close corporate loopholes that do not directly relate to job growth; eliminate the many deductions and exemptions; and increase our capital gains taxes where we can.

-There will be a lot of discussion on what programs to cut, and I don't want to commit to anything until we know more about what the budget will look like. However, any cuts CANNOT come at the expense of public education and hard-working New Mexicans. Instead of immediately looking for programs to cut, we should look at how we can diversify and expand our economy.

How would you continue to support the Yazzie Martinez decision with potential budget cuts?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- Once again, money isn't the cure to what ails education in New Mexico. Funding is just a part of the solution, and I feel that I addressed this in the previous education question.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- Judge Singleton's ruling in this case requires more spending than possible with budget cuts elsewhere given that public education represents approximately 60% of our state budget. With job losses and economic pressures, we cannot cut salaries of educators. We cannot shortchange our students since we cannot later make up for educational opportunities lost. Infrastructure and road spending must be suspended except as federally funding. Capital projects must be suspended and the appropriations for those projects

reallocated to public education spending during this crisis. We have done this previously though not at the level we must do now.

Melissa Ontiveros- It will be important that we prioritize increased access to high-quality educational opportunities that raise student achievement as part of an equitable education financing system. It costs more to educate low-income students and provide them with a robust education. To overcome issues of poverty, low-income students need significant additional funds. Additional funding to low-income schools could attract highly qualified teachers, improve curriculum, and fund additional programs such as early childhood education. I will advocate and support a weighted student funding—which differentiates school budgeting based on the demographics that each school serves. I will work with local, state, and federal policymakers to revamp New Mexico's school funding systems with a focus on quality. I will advocate for federal government increase funding and support on high-poverty schools. I would explore and support grant opportunities to fund programs such as early education, literacy, and/or cultural and linguistic programs.

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- We need to reprioritize our spending by fully funding education. If our state had implemented support in every facet of our educational system our kids would be more successful, we would see a higher graduation rate and prosperous workforce. We also need to consider alternative revenues for our state.

John A. Smith- The governor has challenged this lawsuit and is waiting for a response. Three judges have been assigned to this case since it was filed. I will take the direction of the courts and support funding to comply with the order.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- The key in implementing the requirements from the Yazzie/Martinez case is to listen to the educators who are directly affected by the findings. Our state is required by law to implement a number of issues that were deficient. There is still evidence that some of those issues like internet in rural communities and universal prekindergarten have not

been fulfilled. With potential budget cuts, I would suggest consulting with educators who are directly impacted by the major infractions, address those with the available budget, and then set a timeline for addressing the remaining issues in coordination with educators.

Mary Kay Papen- It is NM State mandated law.

Tracy L. Perry- I want to be very clear that we cannot cut public education funding and that we must continue to abide by the Yazzie decision. New Mexico is constitutionally obligated to sufficiently fund its schools. We have a teacher shortage in New Mexico, and budget cuts will only make us fall further behind the curve and lose jobs to our neighboring States. I still support pay increases for all educators, mentorship programs, and increased resources for underserved communities including Native American Schools. This pandemic does not change the fact that all students deserve a quality education, regardless of their zip code.

Do you have any recommendations for supporting the growth of PreK in light of the new budget constraints?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- PreK is only one part of the statewide early childhood education so I will speak specifically to PreK. Public and private PreK will continue to grow in New Mexico, unfortunately it is currently voluntary and as a result not all parents in the state have access to PreK services. I would like to see it eventually implemented statewide, but I don't foresee that with the current economic uncertainty.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- I was an author of the Pre-K legislation when originally passed and so will work doing everything possible to avoid cuts. Pre-K is an allowable use of Land Grant Permanent Fund resources, and I would favor use of the LGPF to expand Pre-K despite other budget pressures. There is no second opportunity to educate our youth and once that opportunity is missed it cannot be recovered.

Melissa Ontiveros- I will work with local, state and federal policymakers to fund pre-K programs. Considering all the funding options that exist before

identifying the funding mechanism that will best increase the quantity and the quality of pre-K programs in New Mexico.

-I will advocate for funding streams targeted at improving overall quality and improving opportunities and outcomes from all students. Utilizing available funding sources such as:
-Block Grants: lump sum to localities, approach to give additional funding to specific areas or to schools serving students who have high needs.
-Funding Formula: most states use a funding formula based on a per-student funding level, with additional money allocated to needy areas and students
-Grants and Funding Streams: local governments are taking on pre-K policy and creating universal programs at the district
-Match Funding: voluntary preschool program requires local governments or providers to provide matching funding, increasing coordination and stakeholder investment.
-Federal Government Funding: provides pre-K to low-income

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- We need to reprioritize our spending. The Land Grant Permanent Fund is an opportunity to improve on our educational system. We need alternative forms of revenue in our state. NM is 121,590 in SQ. MI prime for wind/solar/tourism/ecotourism/cultural. .. Therefore, the opportunities are abundant.

John A. Smith- Early childhood funding is critically important. I was the senate sponsor for full day kindergarten, and I was the senate sponsor for the early childhood trust fund. In the last 6 years we have increased early childhood funding from \$160 million to right at \$500 million, during the most difficult of financial times. The PED portion and CYFD have to be funded along with the new department. The source will have to be determined in light of the recession and or depression.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- Finding funds for PreK is essential. Research shows that supporting children in the early years creates a solid foundation for success in later years. Again, this is another instance of playing catch up for errors made by not investing in early childhood education by using a portion

of the Permanent Fund. In order for this to be successful, educators need to have input on how best to move forward with the resources available and to learn what the legislature can do to support new resources.

Mary Kay Papen- I was a co-sponsor of the Early Childhood Trust Fund Senate bill and supported the House bill which created a trust fund of \$325 million for Early Childhood education which the Governor signed and is now law.

Tracy L. Perry- I think it's more important than ever to invest in Early Education. I am sensitive to the fact that the budget will be a hot topic, which is why it is so critical to bring in new revenue and stabilize the economy. As I've already stated, there are multiple opportunities that we can take advantage of including Marijuana, solar and wind, capital gains taxes, and lifting certain bureaucratic restraints on small businesses. Now is not the time to be scared. We need to find new sources of income so we can make investments into Early Childhood Education.

With increased temperatures, increasing competition for water, and decreasing ground water, what measures do you support to address the triple whammy these conditions create?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- These conditions are beyond the control of any one person or entity. I support conservation efforts however this will not relieve the demand for water. What I do support is the move to desalinization, there is an abundance of brackish water in our area and a desalinization plant must be considered in order to relieve the need for water for our people.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- I have now served several years as Chairman of the Water and Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Conservation Committee. We must work with Texas and Arizona to negotiation a resolution of lawsuits including in the U.S. Supreme Court. Water committed to agriculture must be better utilized with efficiencies in irrigation methods and crop sciences led by NMSU. Desalination holds much promise when coupled with renewable energy resources of the future including solar, wind and

geothermal. But ultimately we have to confront and reverse climate change and its consequences like drought.

Melissa Ontiveros- Water resources are important to both society and ecosystems. We depend on a reliable, clean supply of drinking water to sustain our health. We also need water for agriculture, energy production, recreation, manufacturing, treaties. Many of these uses put pressure on water resources, stresses that are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. In addition, it is imperative that consumption of water be addressed through conservation measures in all three major sectors of water use: urban, agricultural, and industrial.
-I will advocate to reform government subsidies for water and electricity. I will work with conservation groups, local and native and state leaders to identify strategies for water reservoirs in higher altitudes (decrease evaporation). I will support making living river policies a priority to protect and restore a living Rio Grande. I will support examining water policy reforms to restore clean water and beneficial flows to the Rio Grande, to conserve and provide water for all people and wildlife. I will advocate for strategies to protect New Mexico's ground water from hazardous waste, landfills, atmospheric contaminants, chemicals and road salts.

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- Rivers like the Rio Grande are our lifeline to our communities. Farmers and Ranchers rely on our water supply. We have strong cultural connection to our water.

John A. Smith- I support adequate funding to address the Texas/New Mexico lawsuit. I have supported drip irrigation research and utilization. I have supported solar and wind generation efforts and state renewable energy deadlines.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- I think the water restrictions we have in place for residential areas is effective, but I believe there are strategies that can be implemented to reduce water use that we have yet to put into practice. We have several sustainability offices in town (City of Las Cruces, NMSU, and Doña Ana County) that have suggestions for these issues. We need to support those ideas and implement them. Agriculture is part of the fabric

of our community and with our Land-Grant Institution; we have incredible minds, research, and practice to make farming the most efficient. Also, farmers have traditionally be thoughtful stewards of the resources they need to make a living. I believe members of the farming community need to be part of the discussion and creating the solutions for the Agricultural aspect of this problem.

Mary Kay Papen- I support the increased use of drip irrigation. I support water conservation efforts.

Tracy L. Perry- Although groundwater constitutes about 75% of New Mexico's water supply, our state lacks a comprehensive plan for maintaining this resource. Developing such a plan is necessary for long-term water security and may soon be legally required if the Supreme Court agrees with Texas that excessive groundwater pumping in southern New Mexico violates the Rio Grande Compact. Our Legislature needs to work with the state engineer to develop legislation, modeled on Arizona's Groundwater Management Act, to ensure that our groundwater is managed for equitable and sustainable use. Furthermore, New Mexico can promote water conservation by working with farmers who can save significant quantities of water by adopting water-saving technologies and practices such as drip irrigation, micro-jet spray, and border flood systems. As State Senator, I will work to develop policies that incentivize water conservation in agriculture and throughout our economy. We can do all of this while protecting the Gila River from diversion and restoring the Rio Grande.

What is the current means by which capital improvement authorizations reach individual districts – and do you favor keeping it this way or changing it?

State Rep-District 34

Ray Lara- I'm assuming that this question is in relation to capital outlay funding allocations that legislators receive and not the capital outlay funding that is intended for school districts. Legislative capital outlay is divided up into two funding streams. One is the use of General Fund allocations to fund projects and the other is the use of Severance Tax Bonds to fund the projects. Can the system be improved? I'm sure it could

be, but I have learned to navigate the system in order to maximize capital investments in my legislative district. Thus, providing much needed infrastructure to HD 34.

State Sen-District 31

Joseph Cervantes- For years I have proposed legislation to fundamentally reform our spending on capital projects. New Mexico is consistently rated the worst in the country for the way we designate and prioritize spending. I have managed significant reforms in our capital spending for water projects and that example demonstrates how to do the same for all other infrastructure spending. I work closely with local county and city elected officials to prioritize and partner to appropriate worthy projects which benefit the most New Mexicans.

Melissa Ontiveros- I support the current capital improvement authorizations process. The Infrastructure Capital Improvement plan coordinates and maintains critical infrastructure needs of the state. A bottom up approach with local government entities prioritizing infrastructure projects for their communities.

-ICIP provides information from local governments on priority infrastructure projects for their communities, including details of each project, funding time frames, and estimated costs over the current 5-Year cycle. The intent is to use this process to plan for future capital project needs. This information is used by the legislators to determine priorities for capital outlay allocation to local governments. The process calls for each local government to designate that jurisdictions "Top 5" projects. Generally, funds coming thru the State of New Mexico, can only be allocated to projects listed in the ICIP.

State Sen-District 35

Neomi Martinez-Parra- Capital requests should be more transparent and equitable.

John A. Smith- I appreciate the question but sources of this money come from the fossil fuel industry. The general fund portion has been and will be used for solvency. The severance portion will be greatly delayed due to the bond market conditions. Prudent capital outlay distribution requires all local governments working together and not in competition with each other.

State Sen-District 38

Carrie Hamblen- I feel the process in which Capital Improvement authorizations reach individual districts is severely flawed. First, the needs of rural New Mexico are different than needs of a city like Albuquerque or Santa Fe and yet the allocations for each area regarding the costs to taking care of those needs are the same. There has to be more thought and practicality when designating the set amount for each legislator based on their communities. Once those projects are funded, there is not enough coordination between the legislators and the community to make sure those projects are completed under budget, within budget, or need more funds. There also needs to be more public awareness as to how to request those funds, the process by which they are requested during the session, and how those funds are dispersed. I believe this is the responsibility of the legislator and the state government.

Mary Kay Papan- I support the current Capital outlay system. Senate district 38 has many needs. Being able to help fund our communities' needs is important.

Tracy L. Perry - Capital Outlay is funded mostly by bonds and non-recurring revenue. Capital outlay funding is equally proportional for each Legislative District after funds are allocated through both chambers of the legislature. However, this process has not been formalized in law – which is something that needs to be done in order to bring more transparency to the process. Something that should be done is to make the process more visible to the public
-Capital outlay will be especially difficult in the 2021 Session since non-recurring revenue will be so unpredictable. However, most capital outlay does go to infrastructure projects throughout the State, which is extremely necessary, especially in District 38. We'll need to prioritize where the money goes, while also bringing a new system of transparency to the process.

County Clerk

Assuming you are not going to be directly involved in an election in which you are a candidate, what measures would you take to ensure a

smooth and secure election this November?

Amanda López Askin- Doña Ana County, through ordinance, restricts a current elected official or employee from participating in the administration of election when the official or employee is running for office in a contested race. I have worked closely with my Chief Deputy, Lindsey Bachman, and the rest of the staff to prepare for the 2020 elections.
-Since I have been in office, I have worked diligently to make sure our office is adequately staffed. I have been unapologetic in my focus in ensuring the Clerk's office is staffed and am proud to report that we have a full staff ready to administer elections in DAC.
-The more access we offer our community to the consistent work of our office, the more our community knows how fair, impartial, and well our elections are administered. Our new Communications Coordinator offers this through print, digital, and social media.

-Constant and ongoing staff training of policies/procedures on the administration of an election as well as building supportive relationships with a wide-variety of clerks across the state. This reinforces best practices and builds consistency state-wide, which is a benefit to all New Mexicans.
-Community education on elections has been helpful for me to build relationships in every part of Doña Ana County. This has supported our work on targeted election official recruitment, as election officials are literally the front line of our elections, spread across 40 locations throughout Doña Ana County.

Andrew J Ostic- A. Identify whether the public notice to the voters concerning appointment of polling places and Election Officials assigned to them have been published clearly and bilingually (English/Spanish) within the required time frames specified and that any changes to these are performed solely as prescribed by established election code.

B. Inspect polling places that can clearly be identified to voters by signage visible from access roads with no physical hindrance present with adequate availability of parking.

C. Verify to ensure all Election Officials and standbys were properly appointed and certified as being trained on their duties and responsibilities in the conduct of the election.

D. Verify that the Election Officials have proper written instruction on processing each absentee ballots and that information is communicated to all party officials and candidates prior to the election.

E. Verify that Election Officials understand the right of provisional ballots for voters who are not found on the voter rolls when they present to vote.

F. Obtain an up-to-date and accurate listing of all registered voters who are eligible to vote in election prior to early voting.

G. Verify all sample ballots are distributed for the election show only those candidates and questions eligible to appear on the ballot for each precinct.

What changes to the New Mexico Election Code would you favor – and why?

Amanda López Askin- House Bill 229, also known as the 2020 Cleanup Bill, offered important measures that would make elections in New Mexico more secure and accessible. The bill focused on clarification on identification requirements for same-day voter registration, as well as other necessary administration supports for absentee ballots, precinct changes, and other items. Overall, what HB 229 did was offer minor updates, changes, and needed clarifications to the current election code.

-Although no major changes were included, it would have assisted all of the county clerks across the state in our administration of the election. I am hopeful this bill will move forward in the upcoming session.

-An additional change that I think would make our elections more accessible and supportive of voters, would be to allow registered voters to obtain their absentee ballot every election by applying to be on a permanent absentee list, should they choose to do so.

-Currently, registered voters are required to request an absentee ballot via application every election. With absentee being the focus recently because of the COVID-19 virus, I have heard from countless voters, mostly elderly, who find having to apply every single election to be onerous and a burden. This change would support what is already a robustly secure process and would make voting easier and more user-friendly.

Andrew J Ostic- Change the Election Official qualifications as follows:

A. Appointment of Presiding Judge and Judges: Current statute requires appointment to these positions be restricted to only political party members registered for 2 years with the political party. If they have not been registered for 2 years, they may only serve as election clerk. I would support changing this requirement to allow for replacing an appointed presiding judge or judge who is unable to serve with someone who is currently registered as a voter with the same party, who has already attended an approved election official training.

B. Training: Allow for provision of additional election official training sessions up to the Monday before Election Day. This will ensure that all Election Officials are properly trained.

If, as many have suggested, the November election will rely heavily on absentee ballots, do you think the Clerk's office is adequately prepared – and why?

Amanda López Askin- Since I have been in office, several important changes and supports have been implemented in our Clerk's Office that will assist in support a smooth absentee process.

-One that will be specifically very helpful is the statute connected to the timetable of beginning to qualify absentee ballots. Prior to the passage of HB 407 in 2019, election administrators could not begin the qualification process until 5 days before election day. HB 407 expanded the timetable for counties that receive more than 10,000 absentee ballot applications. Should that happen, the Absentee Precinct Board is able to begin qualifying those envelopes 14 days prior to election day.

-Additionally, expanding our Absentee Precinct Board has been vital. Contrary to what some believe, the Clerk's Office staff does not qualify or process absentee ballots. That is the responsibility of vital community members, who as election officials, qualify and process absentee ballots.

-Having checks and balances in place that support consistent chains-of-custody, with several layers of accountability support an absentee ballot processing that reflects not only statute, but also best practices.

Andrew J Ostic- As many have suggested, the November election will

rely heavily on absentee ballots. I agree.

As for whether I believe that the Clerk's Office is adequately prepared for the challenges to the absentee ballot will be determined during a complete election cycle from the publication of the proclamation, appointment and training of Election Officials, opening of the polls, closing of the polls, and canvassing of the election. The ability of the County Clerk to ensure proper training and instruction to 250 Election Officials for the Primary and General Elections, forty of those Election Officials serving as Early and Absentee Voting Election Officials is paramount to success. By statute, the last day to mail an absentee ballot is on Friday before Election Day but there is no way to determine whether adequate and trained Election Officials will be available.

Some people have said that the November election should be entirely mail in ballots. Is this possible – why or why not?

Amanda López Askin- No voter should have to choose between exercising their Constitutional right to vote and the health and wellness of not only themselves, but their loved ones. As County Clerk, my responsibility is to administer an election set forth in statute. Should the Election Code change, our office will be able to administer an all-mail election in November.

-Our office has been well prepared for a larger than normal absentee turnout, and I am confident in our staff and election officials and our capacity to administer an all-mail election.

Andrew J Ostic- An all-mail ballot Election would be possible. There may be several challenges as follows:

A. An absentee ballot may have been mailed to the wrong address and returned because the voter moved without updating.

B. Large amounts of undeliverable ballots may occur. Undeliverable ballots must be stored and safeguarded.

C. If a voter did not receive a ballot then that voter must be allowed to vote on a replacement ballot. This location must be published.

D. Adequate number of voting tabulators must be available to tabulate ballots as soon as the polls are closed.

E. Same day voter registration and provisional ballots must be offered.

These locations must be published.

In the past many poll workers have been older. Will you be able to recruit and train sufficient poll workers without having to rely on this vulnerable group?

Amanda López Askin- As I respond to this question, we are currently awaiting a decision by the New Mexico Supreme Court that will address whether an all-mail election is possible for June's Primary Election. This decision will likely be made on April 14th.

In preparation for this, our office has been preparing two potential administrative routes for the June Primary. The first is the administration of an election that is status quo – minus one important change on our behalf – which would be a concentrated and aggressive campaign to encourage eligible voters to utilize absentee ballots.

-I am concerned for those that are in what the Center for Disease Control categorize as vulnerable, not only with age, but also with potentially unknown conditions that would also place them in the vulnerable category.

-Should we have to administer our election in-person, we will follow all of the best practices connected to mitigating all of the virus risks that we are able to. We will provide important and necessary safeguards that they would need, as well as work with our vendors to coordinate efficiency and reducing wait time, spatial concerns, as well as potential areas of contamination. All of our election official will be armed with comprehensive information about the risks.

-NM Clerks, as well as the Secretary of State's Office, are having ongoing and detailed conversations about ways we can both staff our elections and be compliant with our Governor's directives.

Andrew J Ostic- In a Primary and General Election, there is an estimated 80-100 Election Officials that are retired or semi-retired. This group is the most reliable on Election Day. If this group decides not to serve Election Day, there will be a lack of Election experience at the polls.

A. Appoint a standby group of 100 Election Officials and pay them to attend Election trainings. This will produce better standby attendance.

B. Additional Election trainings must be offered to accommodate those willing to serve.

C. Election Officials who will serve as Judges and Clerks may be scheduled into 2 work shifts on Election Day.

County Commission

Realizing that there are many national and state level issues right now, what would you say is the most important issue or challenge related to your particular district?

Sam Bradley- With the financial devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recovery will be THE priority for District 4, Doña Ana County, and New Mexico.

-District 4 needs and will continue to need employment support, comprehensive unemployment support including health insurance and retraining, and support for our children who will one day return to in-person education, and protection from eviction. We reached unemployment numbers in three weeks that took 18 months in 2008-09.

-New Mexico lumbered out of the last recession. Now West Texas Intermediate prices have fallen from \$66 per barrel to the high teens. This spells economic devastation.

-Public health experts place a vaccine for the SARS-CoV-2 virus more than a year away. This economic recovery likely will be slower and more painful. This illustrates that the economy was not working for many in Doña Ana County before the pandemic.

-Experienced leadership is crucial. We need county commissioners that understand science and data. We need leaders who focus on innovation and collaboration rather than kudos.

-Locally we must begin building toward a Green New Deal. We need to train mid-career workers to switch industries geared at clean energy production. We must seize this opportunity to insulate our county that is insulated from the fossil fuel booms and busts.

Irma Susana Chaparro- In my opinion, the most important issue in County Commission District 4 is the lack of infrastructure.

Debra Ann Hathaway- The impact of the coronavirus is reflecting the racial and socioeconomic disparities of the states where it's spreading and the health care system that's struggling to

contain it.

The coronavirus doesn't discriminate, but minorities and low-income families in New Mexico are bearing the brunt.

- Lower-income areas have less access to health care services and the quality of that care is often worse than what wealthier parts of the state receive.

- Lower-income workers are less likely to have health insurance. They're also less likely to be able to work from home, and therefore more likely to have to keep going to work and putting themselves at risk.

- Substandard housing, multiple families living together, and homelessness all facilitate the virus' spread.

In New Mexico, health disparities can mean decreased quality of life, loss of economic opportunities, and perceptions of injustice. For society, these disparities translate into less than optimal productivity, higher health-care costs, and social inequity.

Advancing health equity will improve health for New Mexico overall, as well as provide economic benefits to the state. But we cannot rely on individual-level interventions to make gains in health equity. Instead, population-based approaches that reduce poverty, improve the health care safety-net, and address racial discrimination will be necessary to reap the health and economic benefits of health equity in New Mexico.

Do you support or oppose private prisons and detention facilities?

Sam Bradley- I wholly oppose private prisons and detention facilities – including all youth facilities. Mass incarceration tarnishes this nation's reputation with our share of incarcerated individuals greatly outpacing our share of the world's population. Private detention facilities fuel mass incarceration, a system data show to be deeply racist.

Privatizing corrections ties a profit motive directly to incarceration. On its face, this should be sufficient to condemn a system that incentivizes incarceration and longer sentences. It then funds lobbyists to advocate its expansion.

-Much of our Bill of Rights and subsequent Supreme Court case law address how we treat the most vulnerable among us, and the incarcerated are vulnerable. Balancing individual Civil Rights with the profit motive is destined to fail. Countless

auditors and journalists have documented routine rights violation in a private system.

-In addition to those incarcerated, corrections workers in private facilities have been shown to be paid less and face greater dangers than their public counterparts.

-Finally, recidivism rates show that our penal systems are ineffective at best. We need a comprehensive effort to end private corrections.

Irma Susana Chaparro- As County Commissioner, I would oppose private prisons and detention facilities.

Debra Ann Hathaway- I oppose privatizing prisons and detention facilities because:

1. Private prisons experience 50% more violence against employees from inmates when compared to the data from public institutions.
2. The average length of time a prisoner served in a public prison is less than half that of the average prisoner in a private facility. The average cost of housing a medium security inmate in a public prison in 2010 was \$48.42 compared to \$53.02 in a private prison.
3. Private prisons achieve lower operational costs because they reduce their labor expenses. This means lower pay, unsafe working conditions, meager benefits, higher turnover, and lack of job security. Correctional officers and their administrative support personnel receive fewer training opportunities to enhance their skills.
4. The government has overall accountability to a community when a facility fails to provide safe housing to the offender population. Since the right to inspect a business is different in some jurisdictions, there might not be any way to determine if people receive ethical treatment during their stay in the facility.
6. Since for-profit companies need prisoners to make money, they lobby legislative bodies to change how the implementation of laws occurs. Private prisons ask for more extended standard sentencing guidelines because that will help their profit margin while providing revenue security.

Assuming that the economy is not going to grow significantly in the next 2-3 years – and that reducing fraud, waste, and abuse will not provide any significant savings – what percent of County funding should come from property taxes and what percentage of funding should

**come from gross receipts taxes? --
And why?**

Sam Bradley- With the economy in free fall, oil prices below \$20 per barrel, and the stock market resembling a lottery, too little data exist to affix percentages today. The relative merits, however, can be meaningfully addressed.

-Sales taxes (including GRT) are regressive taxes by nature. That is, sales taxes place a greater burden on those with low incomes compared to the wealthy. Any family at or near the poverty line likely spends much of its income on items subject to gross receipts tax.
-During recovery from this recession (likely to become a depression), working families will be hardest hit. "Nonessential" workers may have been laid off, and essential workers are far more likely to have been exposed to COVID-19. Our priority must be getting Doña Ana County families back above water. Suffering families will pay far more GRT than property tax.
-The only "wealth" most Americans will ever possess will be whatever equity they accrue in their home. Housing prices will fall but not at the rate that unemployment rises. This suggests that property taxes will be a more stable source of revenue.

-At present, Doña Ana County takes in \$10 million more in GRT than property taxes (\$53 million vs. \$43 million). I believe that ratio should be reversed. During an economic recovery that will take time to implement, but we must begin.

-During the recovery, property owners, too, are likely to be suffering from rent forgiveness and vacancy. Real recovery will include them, too.

Irma Susana Chaparro- At present, the County receives approximately 27% of its total revenue from property taxes and approximately 32% of its total revenue from gross receipts taxes. Other funding sources include grants and administrative fees.

In the near future, the County will have to rely more heavily on funding from property taxes and other funding sources. Overnight, we have seen businesses close. This has caused a significant reduction in payment of gross receipts taxes by our businesses.

Debra Ann Hathaway- How can I address the question without having a 5 – 10 year strategic plan in place? I think you should be asking when will

you develop our County's long-range strategic plan. Our county government is making short term decisions without long-range plans in place. How can you go forward without a formalized road map that describes how our County will function over the next decade?

A strategic plan guides our decision making to:

-Build a 21st Century infrastructure for a 21st Century economy

-Strengthen educational opportunities and programs within our county for grades 1-12

-Protect our environment and wildlife

-Fund a sustainable jail diversion program

- Focus on mental health issues as part of our overall health care strategy

-Ensure the safety and security of our county

-Expand/promote economic opportunities within our county to the business community as well as to state and federal agencies

-Address the needs of our colonias
But if the County focuses only on short-term needs, we will never reach our true potential. Therefore, we must develop a well-thought-out strategic plan grounded in reality. The plan must be revisited and updated every year to prioritize our strategic choices according to our current situation.

How many colonias are in your district? What taxes would you raise, or other budget items would you cut in order to help them?

Sam Bradley- Officially, five: Butterfield Park, Cattleland, Moongate, Mountainview, and Organ. The needs of our neighbors in these areas have been uprooted this in 2020. Previous needs of clean water, flood control, wastewater, sewage, and infrastructure remain. Now these economically vulnerable residents face more immediate challenges.

-During the recovery, we must ensure that students, workers, and those on fixed incomes have their nutritional and basic safety needs met. Paving impassable roads remains a priority; however, basic survival as human beings comes first. Rather than expansion of programs, we soon will face calls for austerity. Colonia residents have been living a life of austerity too long.

-Having scarcely recovered from the last recession, few easy decisions await budget cutters. Together we must work to build new revenue sources.

-The five colonias in District 4 are

along U.S. 70. I believe the county should actively pursue a special economic development zone similar to what was accomplished downtown.

-The East Mesa is home to many big boxes. These national brands can survive by laying off workers and blocking organizing efforts by employees. Unemployment may be especially high in the already economically challenged colonias. Flood control, road paving, and other infrastructure work may have to be tabled as we work to return the East Mesa to full employment, retraining workers for clean energy development and for the infrastructure work itself.

Irma Susana Chaparro- There are 5 colonias in County Commission District 4; Moongate, Mountain View, Organ, Butterfield Park, and Cattleland. At this time, I would object to raising taxes or cutting budget items until the County has a better idea of what the revenues will be in the next fiscal year due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Debra Ann Hathaway- There are 5 colonias in District 4. I agree with the Doña Ana County Colonia Infrastructure report: Significant investment is needed to address deficient infrastructure in Doña Ana County's 37 colonias. The current approach to infrastructure development is entirely inadequate if the public roads, water supply, wastewater systems, and public facilities in these communities are to be brought up to acceptable standards. Tax policy and public programs—at all levels—must ensure that the fundamental responsibility of government for colonias is fully understood, acknowledged and met.

1.) Develop a comprehensive, long-term strategy equal to the size of community needs.

2.) Secure active buy-in and increased financial support at all levels of government.

3.) Urge creation of a Federal initiative for colonias based on multi-agency partnerships & substantial appropriations.

4.) Increase annual appropriations to the Colonias Infrastructure Development Fund.

5.) Revitalize Doña Ana County's "Colonias Initiative."

6.) Expand the County's capacity to develop and complete projects in a timely, responsive, and cost-effective manner.

7.) Actively engage residents, the

private sector, and non-governmental organizations in colonias projects. I would place this issue as a high priority in our new Strategic Plan.

Under previous County Commissions, the County has lost a \$15 million lawsuit over conditions in the detention facility and paid several millions in settling discrimination lawsuits. What would you do to prevent this disgraceful waste of the taxpayer's money?

Sam Bradley- This pattern must end. An organization as large as this county has countless rules, ethical standards, and codes of conduct. Yet these settlements continue to recur due to poor individual judgment. If all employees were held to the policies and procedures in place, then there would be little opportunity for legal action. This falls upon leadership and on the hiring process.

-Being a supervisor in the public sector is rarely enjoyable in the details. However, when seemingly mundane tasks such as performance evaluations are taken lightly, the opportunity for abuse increases. "Writing someone up" is unpleasant at best. Yet if initial small infractions are overlooked, it makes termination of an employee difficult when a larger infraction occurs. Moreover, it silently excuses those infractions in the eyes of colleagues.

-Commercially there are many vendors that provide training tools for maintaining a safe, tolerant, and cordial workplace. During the annual review process, countywide data should be compiled and analyzed to determine where more training could be beneficial. Hopefully small transgressions can be corrected, and the employee can continue toward a successful career with the county.

-Standards exist. Supervisors must stick to them, and employees must be given a work environment where they feel safe reporting improper behavior from a supervisor. From the first day on the job, a no tolerance environment must be clear.

Irma Susana Chaparro- The Board of County Commissioners has the responsibility to set policy for the county. Providing constant training, defining expectations and setting an example of professional conduct are some of the ways of preventing the paying of taxpayers' money to settle lawsuits.

Debra Ann Hathaway- The County Commission establishes policy for the county and the County Manager and county staff implement policy and are responsible for day-to-day operations of county government.

If the County is repeatedly sued, (There are two pending) then it's time to reevaluate the status quo. Two Commissioners held an inspection in January of the Detention Center which has been ground zero for lawsuits. While this is a great start, is it enough? While I am not privy to what is currently being done behind closed doors, I can express my observations in what has proven successful during my career.

- 1.) I found character is often demonstrated in how closely our actions, decisions, and relationships adhere to ethics and values. Character counts.
- 2.) We must hold leaders and ourselves accountable to create, nurture, and promote a culture of integrity so peers push others to act appropriately.
- 3.) It's important to encourage employees to report wrongdoing. When serious incidences occur and no one steps forward to report it, the Leadership is accountable. It may be staff aren't clear where to go and/or how to file a report or, more seriously, there is an atmosphere of fear of retaliation in the workplace. The ethics and whistleblower program must be improved and used effectively.

I believe it is a Commissioner's duty to ensure proper policies are in place and County leadership and staff are adhering to these policies and protecting the citizens of our county.

In anticipation of some capital money cuts from the legislature in a special session, what would be your top 5 projects you would advocate for your District

Sam Bradley- If I am elected, every priority will be the economic recovery of the people of District 4 and the county. Looking toward a lengthy economic recovery with high unemployment, every project must be judged by whether a dollar spent will have a multiplier effect in the county. That is, if the county spends a dollar, will that dollar be paid to a worker to spend again in the county, or will it quickly go out-of-state?

-This is where I believe I can make the best connection to my neighbors. I'm not retired. I still work, and I have school age children. We work together,

literally, in this recovery.

-The New Deal provided needed infrastructure while putting Americans to work. Our county's infrastructure needs are immense. However, if we have roadwork and flood control work desperately needed, and we have unprecedented unemployment, then county leaders must work with the state to try to solve both problems simultaneously.

-Every single resident of District 4 represents an equal top priority to me. During this unprecedented crisis, I cannot place pavement before people. The county is its people. A person suffering outranks a road suffering.

-As we emerge from the pandemic, cooperation is key. During the 2020 legislative session, area legislators carved out capital outlay cooperatively. These experienced individuals already grappled with the relative merits of so many county needs, any ranking of projects begins with our local caucus.

Irma Susana Chaparro- The top projects that I would advocate for in District 4 are as follows:

- 1) Provide stronger law enforcement presence.
- 2) Plan and design storm water & improvements in the East Mesa to prevent flooding.
- 3) Provide better equipment for firefighters and first responders.
- 4) Help businesses reopen.
- 5) Work to create new jobs and help build a more resilient economy.

We are facing hard times in our county. Working together, we will get through this.

Debra Ann Hathaway-

1. Dragonfly Channel: This project is an outfall channel for the Brahman Dam. This project can be constructed in multi-phases and by multi-year funding. The Brahman Dam and Dragonfly Channel are key elements to the East Mesa Master Drainage Plan. These facilities will be the backbone of future flood control facilities and need to be constructed prior to most other major flood control facilities in the area.
2. Brahman Dam: Construct a flood control dam that ties into the northern end of an existing channel known as the Dragonfly Channel.. The Brahman Dam and Dragonfly Channel are key elements to the East Mesa Master Drainage Plan and will be the backbone of future flood control facilities.
3. Higgins Lane: Roadway reconstruction project aimed to protect

area residents susceptible to overland storm water flooding due to existing roadway conditions. The project will provide access and edge of pavement fraying control, with inclusion of curb and gutter.

4. Butterfield Blvd- Construct a road within the Butterfield Park Community in Doña Ana County.

5. Organ roads- Provide safe and efficient conveyance of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, while providing separation of both and conveying storm water flows to reduce erosion and flood susceptibility to the adjoining properties and roadway features.

County Treasurer

Given the uncertain future for investments, how would you protect the Doña Ana County's funds?

Eugenia (Gina) Montoya Ortega-

Given the uncertain future for investments I would protect Doña Ana County's funds by, continuing to work closely with our Department of Finance and Administration assuring that all investments comply with the guidelines described in our investment policy and ensuring the safety of our investments.

Eric L Rodriguez- First and foremost, the primary objective of the county's portfolio is preservation of principal. We only invest in government backed securities, and collateralized assets. An economic downturn may cause yield compression, but the principle is not exposed to risk of loss. Secondly, we follow an investment policy that already mitigates risk. Third, our current strategy is to stay on a laddered approach. As investments come due, we reinvest them according to liquidity needs. Our maturities are staggered so that we can replace assets with current market rates. Basically, we are spreading risk and averaging returns.

What measures have you taken or intend to take to keep collected funds here in the County?

Eugenia (Gina) Montoya Ortega- As the Treasurer of Doña Ana County one of the measures I intend to take on keeping collected funds here in Doña Ana County is to work closely with our Department of Finance and Administration, whom the Treasurer is subject to guidance from as well as Treasurer's office staff members. I would focus on working with delinquent property tax payers on

delinquent taxes, as once delinquent properties are turned over to the State of New Mexico, so is all the interest, penalties, and other fees which is money that could have been kept and used here in Doña Ana County rather than by our state.

For example "the Bernalillo County Treasurer's office (currently the only NM State county's Treasurer's office to achieve a "triple A" Bond rating from Moody's Fitch and Standard and Poor's) collected over \$14 Million in delinquent taxes from the 2016 property tax year, approximately 89% of the outstanding tax notices, which represents the highest collection amount for Bernalillo County in the last 10 years".

Eric L Rodriguez- The answer is easy, invest more in local banks! However, the application is more complicated than that. New Mexico laws require that banks collateralize public funds by up to 102% above FDIC coverage. This means that banks will have to front their own money to hold public funds, reducing their cash flows to lend out and meet reserve requirements. During my term as treasurer we have increased local investments and added new relationships by lowering the collateral requirement to 50% for qualified local banks based on a quarterly risk assessment established by the State Board of Finance. It also helps us negotiate rates making local banks more competitive. In addition, we will be introducing certificate of deposit account placement services, which allow us to place one deposit in a bank that is divided out to participating banks in FDIC coverage increments, effectively reducing collateral requirements. With your vote I can lead and navigate this complex investment vehicle that will benefit local banks.

What changes or improvements in the operation of the Treasurer's office do you think are necessary?

Eugenia (Gina) Montoya Ortega- Changes or improvements in the operation of the Treasurer's office that I believe are necessary are honesty, transparency, instilling dignity, integrity and pride back into the Treasurer's office, achieving a "triple A" Bond Rating, obtaining 100% clean financial audits, providing all the tax payers of Doña Ana County the same excellent customer service and same methods possible, utilizing all possible payment methods, community outreach

and education, ensuring all office rules and regulations are being followed, establishing properly trained staff, securing a professional rapport with all county management and staff, maximizing the rate of return on our investments, ensuring the safekeeping of public records, improving/updating the department's website making it more user friendly and promising/guaranteeing the constituents of Doña Ana County that David Gutierrez will not be part of our Doña Ana County Treasurer's office in any way shape or form.

Eric L Rodriguez- During my term I introduced e-billing options, convenience payment locations for our rural taxpayers, offered pre-payment plans to reduce the tax burden for lower income households, and enhanced external payment options. I have maintained clean audits, reduced liability risks and helped contribute to a county credit rating increase. The portfolio saw a 70% revenue increase and there has been a 60% reduction in delinquent accounts turned over to the state. Overall customer service has also improved. Online financial reports and easy to read annual tax distribution newsletters have created more transparency. Sure, there is always more room for improvement, and these last three years are proof that I am capable of making them. My current goal is to focus on legislation that will provide relief for taxpayers that have been financially hurt by the COVID-19 crisis. For more information about my candidacy visit www.rodriquez4treasurer.com.

-This was organized and sponsored by the Democratic Party of Dona Ana County Forum Committee: Jan Hertzsch, Jane Asche, Pattie Gipson, Peter Ossorio, Dante Archibeque.