



**MINUTES
of the
FOUR-HUNDRED-THIRTY-FIRST MEETING
of the
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**April 17, 2026
State Capitol, Room 307
Santa Fe**

The four-hundred-thirty-first meeting of the Legislative Council was called to order by Senator Mimi Stewart, co-chair, on April 17, 2026 at 9:40 a.m. in Room 307 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Rep. Javier Martínez, Co-Chair
Sen. Mimi Stewart, Co-Chair
Rep. Gail Armstrong
Sen. Pete Campos
Rep. Christine Chandler
Sen. Katy Duhigg
Rep. Doreen Y. Gallegos
Rep. Dayan Hochman-Vigil
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Sen. Michael Padilla
Sen. William E. Sharer
Rep. Reena Szczepanski
Sen. Peter Wirth
Sen. Pat Woods

Absent

Rep. Rebecca Dow
Sen. David M. Gallegos

Special Advisory Members Present

Rep. Andrea Romero

Special Advisory Members Absent

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Angel M. Charley
Sen. Natalie Figueroa
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

Staff

Shawna Casebier, Director, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Randall Cherry, Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs, LCS
Monica Ewing, Assistant Director for Drafting Services, LCS
Anesa Serna-Espinoza, Assistant Director for Administration, LCS
Jeret Fleetwood, Project Coordinator, LCS
Sara Wiedmaier, Researcher, LCS
Erin Bond, Researcher, LCS

Welcome and Introductions

Senator Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting, and members introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made and passed unanimously, the minutes of the January 19, 2026 meeting were adopted. On a motion made and passed unanimously, the council approved the meeting agenda.

Interim Committee Appointments

Senator Stewart and Representative Martínez announced the following changes to the interim committees as appointed in 2025:

- yearly chair rotations will occur for the Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee; the Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee; the Land Grant Committee; the Mortgage Finance Authority Act Oversight Committee; the New Mexico Finance Authority Oversight Committee; the Revenue Stabilization and Tax Policy Committee; the Tobacco Settlement Revenue Oversight Committee; and the Water and Natural Resources Committee;
- Senators Charley and Larry R. Scott and Representatives Marianna Anaya and Jenifer Jones will serve as voting members of the Behavioral Health Subcommittee of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee, with Senator Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics and Representative Eleanor Chávez serving as co-chairs;
- the Federal Funding Stabilization Subcommittee is recreated and renamed the Federal Funding Stabilization and Affordability Subcommittee (FFSAS);
- Senator William P. Soules is removed as co-chair of FFSAS, and Senator Cindy Nava will serve as co-chair;
- the Legislative Interim Committee Working Group is recreated, and Senator Padilla will serve as chair;
- Senator Anthony L. Thornton is removed as an advisory member of the Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee, Senator James G. Townsend will serve as a voting member and Senator Pat Boone will serve as an advisory member;
- Senator Leo Jaramillo is removed from the Interim Legislative Ethics Committee, and Senator Duhigg will serve as co-chair, with Senator Crystal Brantley serving as a voting member;
- Senator Heather Berghmans will serve as an advisory member of the Mortgage Finance Authority Act Oversight Committee; and
- Senator Rex Wilson will serve as a voting member on the Indian Affairs Committee and the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee, as an advisory member on the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee and as a standing advisory member on the Revenue Stabilization and Tax Policy Committee.

On a motion made and passed, the council reappointed the interim committees as appointed in the 2025 interim with the listed changes; authorized the speaker and president pro tempore to revise and make interim committee appointments as needed; and approved the use of

the Capitol Kitchen Fund to purchase coffee and supplies for interim committee meetings in the State Capitol. Representatives Armstrong and Martinez voted no.

As an addendum, a list of 2026 interim committee appointments as announced in the meeting can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=ALC&Date=4/17/2026&ItemNumber=3>.

Members discussed creating a temporary interim committee to investigate allegations of fraud, waste and abuse of state funds. Members discussed the desire for legislative oversight of state funds; the role of the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), interim committees and state agencies in financial oversight of state agencies; the need for a report from the FFSAS; and the strain on legislators and staff created by the current number of interim committees. At the request of the council, Charles Sallee, director, LFC, discussed the work and role of the LFC.

A motion to create an interim committee on fraud, waste and abuse of state funds was made and failed. Senators Campos, Duhigg, Padilla, Wirth and Stewart and Representatives Chandler, Gallegos, Hochman-Vigil, Szczepanski and Martínez voted no.

Out-of-State Travel for Non-Returning Member

Senator Stewart reminded council members that legislators who are not returning for the next legislative session require Legislative Council approval to be reimbursed for out-of-state travel. On a motion made, the council failed to authorize out-of-state travel for non-returning members. Representatives Armstrong and Martinez and Senators Sharer and Woods voted no. The vote on the motion was ten in favor and four opposed, meaning that the required three-fourths' majority was not met.

Mileage and Per Diem for House Resolution 1 (2026) Special Investigatory Committee Members

On a motion made and passed unanimously, the council approved mileage and per diem for members of the House Resolution 1 (2026) Special Investigatory Committee.

Board and Commission Appointments

Representative Martínez announced the following appointments and reappointments:

- Representative Chávez to the Fostering Connections Advisory Committee;
- Elizabeth Kuuttila to the New Mexico Bioscience Authority;
- Michael Loftin to the Opportunity Enterprise and Housing Development Review Board; and
- Representatives Janelle Anyanonu and Brian G. Baca to the Statewide Youth Violence Summit Planning Group.

Senator Stewart announced the following appointments and reappointments:

- Raúl E. Burciaga to the Uniform Law Commission;
- Senators Linda M. López and Antoinette Sedillo Lopez to the Statewide Youth Violence Summit Planning Group; and
- Prisca Tiasse to the New Mexico Bioscience Authority.

On a motion made and passed, the appointments were accepted.

On a motion made and passed unanimously, the council authorized reimbursement for legislators and public members appointed to the Uniform Law Commission if they are not otherwise eligible for reimbursement from another source.

Staff Reports

Ms. Casebier provided a summary of the 2026 legislative session, stating that a total of 610 bills were introduced between the House of Representatives and the Senate, although 880 bills were drafted by the LCS. Of the introduced bills, 74 passed both chambers and 71 were signed by the governor. The LCS drafted 385 amendments, 118 substitutes and 193 other pieces of legislation, such as memorials and resolutions, of which 126 were introduced. The LCS also drafted 180 certificates for the House of Representatives and the Senate. Ms. Casebier noted that these statistics do not include bills drafted for the 2025 special sessions.

Ms. Casebier stated that there are several job vacancies in the LCS. Based on available space and staffing needs, the LCS plans to hire three new staff attorneys.

Ms. Casebier discussed the progress of two technology projects. She stated that, in 2022, the LCS entered into a contract with Ernst & Young to create a comprehensive legislative program, the Roundhouse Legislation and Publication System (RLPS). Ms. Casebier noted that the new system is currently being tested and staff is hopeful that all of the bugs will be worked out and sufficient training will be accomplished for the RLPS to be used in the 2027 session. The LCS also received funding during the 2026 session for the development of an integrated capital outlay system with the aim of streamlining the capital outlay request and reauthorization process and facilitating capital outlay data use. The project has started and should be completed by late fall of this year.

Ms. Casebier stated that the capitol furniture project continues, with task chairs being the most recent delivery.

Ms. Casebier acknowledged the fence around part of the State Capitol building, which marks the beginning of the State Capitol concourse renovation. She stated that the project is estimated to cost \$7.5 million and that the north side's renovation should be completed by December 2026. The building remains open to the public with signage posted to indicate access to accessible doors. Ms. Casebier cautioned that the renovation may be loud, and LCS staff are reviewing ways to reduce disruption to committees.

Ms. Casebier reported that, pursuant to Legislative Council Policy No. 12, Legislative Space, the New Mexico Youth and Government program of the YMCA and Women's Leadership Panel were allowed use of State Capitol chambers and committee rooms.

Ms. Casebier noted that the next Legislative Council meeting would include the approval of interim committee work plans and requested that a Facilities Review Subcommittee meeting also be included.

Council members discussed possible dates for the next Legislative Council meeting, recognizing that interim committees and staff need time to meet and prepare work plans.

A council member asked that the LCS look to hire a bill drafter with experience in information technology to draft bills.

Representative Martínez requested that the LCS and interested members research ways to improve the legislative process via technology. He also announced that, in light of her two-year anniversary as director of the LCS, the Legislative Council would hold a performance review for Ms. Casebier with the co-chairs and the majority and minority leaders of both chambers as participants.

A council member requested time on the next meeting's agenda to discuss possible litigation regarding the governor's use of the General Fund Operating Reserve for emergency spending and the appropriateness of the governor's line-item vetoes. Senator Stewart stated that the matter would require an executive session with review from outside counsel. Members discussed possible time lines for the review and executive session. In response to a question from the council, Ms. Casebier stated that the LCS could do a review of the issues and create a memo in preparation for the council's next meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the council, the meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.