



**MINUTES
of the
FOUR-HUNDRED-TWENTY-NINTH MEETING
of the
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**December 5, 2025
State Capitol, Room 307
Santa Fe**

The four-hundred-twenty-ninth meeting of the Legislative Council was called to order by Senator Mimi Stewart, co-chair, on December 5, 2025 at 9:50 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
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. Dayan Hochman-Vigil
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Sen. Michael Padilla
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero*
Sen. William E. Sharer
Sen. Peter Wirth

Absent

Rep. Rebecca Dow
Rep. Doreen Y. Gallegos
Rep. Reena Szczepanski
Sen. Pat Woods

Special Advisory Members Present

Sen. Angel M. Charley

Special Advisory Members Absent

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Natalie Figueroa
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Andrea Romero
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

*Appointed by the speaker of the house or the president pro tempore of the senate as a voting member for this meeting only.

Staff

Shawna Casebier, Director, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Randall Cherry, Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs, LCS
Anesa Serna-Espinoza, Assistant Director for Administration, LCS
Jeret Fleetwood, Project Coordinator, LCS
Erin Bond, Researcher, LCS
Domenica Nieto, Research Assistant, LCS
Gabriel Suazo, Intern, LCS

Welcome

Senator Stewart welcomed the council.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made and passed unanimously, the council adopted the minutes of the September 29, 2025 meeting of the council as submitted.

Interim Approvals

Senator Stewart stated that several interim committees had requested December meetings to replace meetings canceled for the second special session of the 57th Legislature and noted that the Legislative Council must approve any interim committee meetings that occur after December 1.

On a motion made and passed unanimously, the council authorized any interim committees with meetings canceled by the second special session to meet in December.

Legislative Staff Code of Conduct Holding and Running for Elected Office Prohibitions

Senator Stewart explained that the district office working group, composed of chiefs of staff and chief clerks of both chambers and the director of LCS, has provided options relating to the prohibition on legislative staff holding and running for elected office for the council to consider. Ms. Casebier explained that there are two main questions to consider: which elected offices should legislative employees be prohibited from holding and, if a legislative employee files for or accepts a nomination to a prohibited office, how must the employee proceed during the campaign.

Ms. Casebier presented the working group's possible answers to the question of which elected offices would be prohibited. All the proposals had some degree of support from members of the working group, but none had consensus agreement. The options are:

1. a blanket prohibition against legislative employees from holding any elected office;
2. a blanket prohibition against legislative employees from holding any elected office except tribal elected office;
3. a prohibition against legislative employees holding any elected federal, state, county or municipal office; or
4. a prohibition against legislative employees holding any partisan office, including federal, state, and county elected offices.

Members discussed the implications of changing the Legislative Staff Code of Conduct after district legislative aides (DLAs) had been hired, noting that some DLAs had resigned from elected office under the current prohibition. Members discussed possible conflicts of interest that could arise if a DLA campaigns for or holds elected office. Members clarified that holding tribal office is excluded from the blanket prohibition.

On a motion made and passed, the council adopted option three, prohibiting legislative employees from holding any elected federal, state, county or municipal office. Representatives Armstrong and Martinez and Senators Gallegos and Sharer voted no.

Ms. Casebier presented the working group's proposals to the question of how a legislative employee should proceed during a campaign if the employee files for or accepts the nomination to a prohibited office. The options are:

1. the legislative employee must resign from legislative employment to campaign; or
2. the legislative employee may use approved leave to campaign during working hours; if elected, the employee must resign from legislative employment.

Council members discussed the options, with Ms. Casebier noting that the working group does not have a consensus opinion. Members discussed types and quantity of leave earned by legislative employees and how a prolonged leave of absence may impact workflow.

On a motion made and passed, the council adopted option one, requiring a legislative employee to resign from legislative employment to campaign for a prohibited office. Representative Roybal Caballero and Senator Duhigg voted no.

District Legislative Aide Classification and Compensation

Senator Stewart reminded the council that the district office working group was also asked to offer options on DLA classification and compensation plans. Ms. Casebier explained that, when the DLA position was created, Legislative Council Policy No. 27 set the salary for the DLA positions at, at most, 75 percent of the maximum salary of classification band E. Based on feedback from legislators, the working group proposed providing a one-time salary adjustment for current DLAs and removing the 75 percent cap language to match hiring policies for all other legislative staff.

Ms. Casebier explained the working group's proposal that, to obtain a DLA salary adjustment, a legislator would petition LCS Human Resources to review their DLA's salary, education, experience and skills compared to others serving in the DLA position by December 15. If the DLA meets one or more of the exceptions set forth in Subsection F of Legislative Council Policy No. 20, salary adjustments would begin January 17. Late petitions would still be considered, but review may be delayed by the legislative session.

Members discussed how the DLA salary adjustment could impact a DLA's ability to receive a raise in the same year. Ms. Casebier explained that the adjustment would not be considered a raise and would not prevent an employee from receiving the 3-percent merit-based raise described in Legislative Council Policy No. 20. Members discussed who would be most appropriate to decide if a DLA is uniquely qualified for a salary above 75 percent of the salary range or raise more than 3 percent.

In response to a question from a council member, Ms. Casebier stated that the DLA salary adjustments would not exceed the budget allocated to DLA salaries or cause any DLAs to surpass classification band E.

On a motion made and passed, the council adopted the policy change and allowed for a one-time salary adjustment for DLAs. Representatives Armstrong and Martinez voted no.

Appointments

Senator Stewart stated that, pursuant to House Bill 19 (2025) and Senate Bill 169 (2025), the Legislative Council must appoint members to the Trade Ports Advisory Committee and the Strategic Economic Development Site Advisory Committee. Senator Stewart and Representative Martínez recommended Alex Nellos, Hilma Chynoweth, Priscilla Lucero, Lucinda Vargas and Mario Infante to both committees.

On a motion made and passed unanimously, the council appointed Alex Nellos, Hilma Chynoweth, Priscilla Lucero, Lucinda Vargas and Mario Infante to both committees.

Staff Reports

Ms. Casebier announced the hiring of two new LCS staff attorneys, Em Green and Lisa Morrison. Ms. Casebier also recognized that Galaxy Dancer was promoted to Word Processing supervisor and Sheila Keleher to Capital Outlay Programs Coordinator.

Ms. Casebier reported, in response to a request at the June Council meeting, that \$5,441.36 was expended to reimburse travel expenses for three experts during the 2025 interim. The experts presented separately to the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee, the Investments and Pensions Oversight Committee and the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee.

Ms. Casebier reported that the New Mexico Model United Nations and the New Mexico Youth and Government, a program of the YMCA of Central New Mexico, were allowed use of the chambers.

Ms. Casebier updated the council on renovations to the capitol building. The fourth floor universal restroom and lactation room is near completion, while a Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) remodel is complete. The LFC is interested in additional renovations during the 2026 interim, if approved by the Facilities Review Subcommittee.

Ms. Casebier stated that the next Legislative Council meeting is scheduled for January 19, the day before the 2026 legislative session begins.

In response to a question from Senator Stewart, Senator Padilla reported on the progress of the Legislative Interim Committee Working Group and requested that the working group have more time to work on interim committee reforms. The Legislative Council acquiesced, but requested that the working group have recommendations before the 2027 interim and an update at the next Legislative Council meeting.

Representative Armstrong requested that the next Legislative Council meeting's agenda have time reserved to discuss the executive branch's ability to spend money without clear legislative authorization.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the council, the meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.