



Leland Gould  
NMPMA  
Executive Director

## New Mexico Primary Elections 2024

**All but seven Democratic incumbent legislators** beat back challengers in the June 4th primary election with Republican voters in southeastern New Mexico ousting two recent Republican appointees of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to select their own candidates.

With the Statewide voter turnout of just under 23% or a fifth of registered voters, progressives had gains in the House and Senate.

If Democrats show the same results in the general election, a state already controlled by the Democrats with their super majority will move even further to the left.

Three House Democrats from rural areas of New Mexico lost their bids for reelection: Willie Madrid from Chaparral, representing District 53; District 70 Ambrose Castellano, representing Torrance and San Miguel counties; and Harry Garcia of Grants, representing District 69. In the most recent legislative session, all three legislators voted against the controversial Senate Bill 3 which would have created the Paid Family Leave Act. The bill died in the House on a 36-34 vote.

Two long-serving incumbent Democrats lost their primaries to more progressive candidates, Senator Daniel Ivy-Soto of District 15 and Senator Bill O'Neill from District 13, both in Albuquerque.

All 112 legislative seats are on the ballot this year. Currently there are 45 Democrats in the House and 25 Republicans. In the Senate there are 27 Democrats and 15 Republicans.

## News Around New Mexico

### State Legislators May Start Hiring Aides Soon:

In the next year, more than 100 new positions will be created in the New Mexico State Legislature, after the approval of a \$6 million appropriation to hire year-round legislative aides. The Legislative Council voted 10-0 to approve an associated measure. The positions are expected to pay between \$60,000 and \$75,000. Each legislator eventually will be able to hire an aide, who will help with scheduling and other work throughout the year, out of new district offices.

Incumbents running unopposed in the general election can start hiring September 1. Incumbents who win their election can field job candidates in November, newly elected legislators will have their chance in April.



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The measure is part of a “modernization” effort in the Legislature. New Mexico is the last state legislature in the country where representatives serve on a volunteer basis – a system which Speaker of the House Javier Martinez, D-Albuquerque, said was “romanticized.” It can be difficult, he said, to manage scheduling and all the responsibilities of a legislator while still working another job.

### Exxon Mobil Deal Gets FTC Nod

Exxon Mobil’s \$60 billion deal to buy Pioneer Natural Resources received clearance from the Federal Trade Commission, but the former CEO of Pioneer was barred from joining the new company’s board of directors. The deal with Pioneer in the Permian Basin, a huge oilfield that straddles the basin between Texas and New Mexico will combine Pioneer’s 850,000 acres with Exxon’s 570,000 acres. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer along with 22 other Democratic senators had urged the FTC to investigate the deal and a separate merger between Chevron and Hess.

### ConocoPhillips Buying Marathon Oil for \$17.1 Billion:

ConocoPhillips is buying Marathon Oil in an all-stock deal valued at approximately \$17.1 billion as energy prices rises and big oil companies reap massive profits. The deal is valued at \$22.5 billion when including debt. Marathon Oil has been operating in the Permian basin since 2017 and the majority of its acreage is in New Mexico’s Eddy and Lea counties.

### Republicans Select New Mexico House Leaders:

Faced with a void at the top of their ranks due to Representative Ryan Lane’s resignation, Republicans in the state House of Representatives have selected Farmington lawmaker Rod Montoya as minority leader. The House caucus also chose freshman Representative Alan Martinez as minority whip.



### Federal Judge Allows Release of New Mexico Voter Information:

The Secretary of State's office has lost a battle to keep New Mexico voter information from being published online by a national conservative organization after a judge ruled the information is public under federal law. The ruling found that Voter Foundation LLC was entitled to information from New Mexico voter registration rolls and that the Secretary of State's office violated a federal election transparency law in denying the Foundation the records.

### Lawmakers Voice Concerns as Special Session Nears:

New Mexico's special session will be in July, but lawmakers are still voicing the same sentiment – “*nobody's on the same page.*” While policy makers generally agree that New Mexico has a crime problem, exactly how to address it is still up in the air. Senator “Moe” Maestas, D-Albuquerque, and Reps Joy Garrett, D-Albuquerque and Andrea Reeb, R-Clovis, came together for a townhall on crime.

Lawmakers on both sides said they're looking forward to what could get done in the special session, which starts July 18th, but are not in complete agreement with the proposals Governor Grisham's office has put forth. Reeb said the Governor's informal agenda so far is too complicated to address in a few days, especially regarding criminal competency and mental health issues. Maestas said lawmakers should agree on five or six bills to pass in the special session, helping the state to catch up on laws he said are behind, and Representative Martinez agreed.

### Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham Says New Mexico is “Epicenter” for Clean Energy:

New Mexico has a ton of renewable energy opportunities, and more are coming.

That's what Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham said at Electrify New Mexico, an inaugural electrification conference held in Albuquerque. She touted how the state can grow its economy by producing clean energy. She said New Mexico is getting huge investments from the private sector and the federal government. She also praised recent state legislative moves, such as clean fuels and refundable tax credits for renewable energy.

### Local Officials Uphold Clean Car Rules:

New Mexico clean vehicle rules will stay in effect, local and state officials ruled. The ruling denies a request from local dealerships

to pause the new policies while an appeal is before the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Last November, state officials approved new zero-emission vehicle rules, much to the dismay of car dealerships. The policies will increase how many zero-emission vehicles are in New Mexico, requiring auto manufacturers to deliver 43% zero-emission model 2027 vehicles and 82% zero-emission model 2032 vehicles.

### New Mexico's Newest Tax Credits for Electric Vehicles:

New Mexicans can chip thousands of dollars off buying a new or preowned electric vehicle with some of the state's newest tax credits. Combined with federal tax credits, that could mean over \$10,000 in savings for a new EV and over \$6,000 in savings for a used EV.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed off on two new refundable personal and corporate income credits for electric vehicles as part of New Mexico's tax package. The tax credits are eligible for purchases of electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles or fuel cell vehicles. It's also applicable for new leases that are at least three years long.

### Advanced Energy Economy Requires Major Investment in Infrastructure:

State Representative Meredith Dixon said “*As we stand on the precipice of a changing climate and work toward a net-zero economy, it is clear that the advanced energy economy is not just a trend, but a necessity.*”

The global shift toward carbon-free energy sources presents an opportunity for New Mexico to lead the way in the burgeoning field. However, the transition to an advanced energy economy is not without challenges. It requires significant investment infrastructure, education, and workforce development. During the last legislative session, legislation was passed to help promote the growth of an advanced energy sector and a trained workforce.

Action was taken on House Bill 177, the New Mexico Match Fund, which will enable local governments to access historic federal investment funding for infrastructure, research, and projects that move the needle on the energy transition. We also passed House Bill 41, the Clean Fuels Act, which will allow for cleaner fuel options for drivers to decrease the emissions from driving, one of the largest contributors to emissions.



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