

Meeting Minutes District 4 Coalition May 21st, 2025

In attendance: Academy North, Alameda North Valley Association, Albuquerque Meadows, Bear Canyon, Cherry Hills, Heritage East, North Domingo Baca, Quail Springs, Vineyard Estates,

Friends of D4C: Irene Minke

Guests: Alfred Des Diaz, Margie Funch, Sue Nichols, Dan Regan

Guest Speakers: Representative Marian Matthews, Dist. 27, Senator Heather Berghmans, Dist. 15, Senator Nicole Tobiassen, Dist. 21, Representative Elizabeth Diane Torres-Velasquez, Dist. 30, Representative Nicole Chavez, Dist. 31, Representative Kathleen Cates, Dist. 44

Meeting called to order by Lorna Howerton @ 6:39pm

Introduction of the Co-presidents of the coalition. board members, members at large.

Approval of Minutes from April 16th, 2025: Motion to approve the minutes made by Steve Wentworth and seconded by Goldialu Stone, all in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Report

Councilor Bassan was unable to attend the meeting. No report provided this month.

Legislative Guest Speakers

Senator Nicole Tobiassen, Dist. 21

District Boundaries: Sandia Casino to Academy and Spain. Tramway to the interstate. East side of Tramway First half of High desert. She is on the senate Finance committee.

Priorities for the state: Safety in abundance. We all deserve to live in safety, and we really have to get a handle on how we are handling crime. And what we are doing for the incarcerated - behavioral health and reintegration into society. Economic development and education.

Sponsored Senate bill 300 **ACCESS TO ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS** - centered around adult literacy. 10 million dollar appropriation in the budget that higher ed has access to. NM is now #1 in Adult ill- literacy - NM has now trumped California.

Gave 1 million dollar of capital outlay to finish NDBMC pool.

Most anxious: House bill 11 **PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**. 5th time has come to the roundhouse in various forms. \$9000 born or adopted per child. Sounds great but that would mean an additional 193 million

dollars a year (based on the birth rate) that was nowhere in the budget. When there was lots of talk about federal cuts going on.

Good things:

Payment for certain tests. People seeking GED- \$150 tests, and now higher education will waive that fee.

SB 100 INDEBTEDNESS LIMIT OF ARROYO FLOOD CONTROL - passed- it has not been updated in decades and we need it to make sure we have houses in case there is a floor or torrential rains.

SB 283 CYFD & USE OF FEDERAL BENEFITS State government gets funds from the federal gov. for each kid in the care of the state (2100 kids in NM) and they were putting it in a pot and instead of distributing it to each kid individually. This bill will make it so CYFD must distribute the funds to each kid.

SB434 MATH & READING ACADEMIC SUPPORT academic support and reading. Our kids are struggling with reading and math at all levels.

SB299 NOTICE OF VACANT LEGISLATIVE OFFICE - Sen. Tobiasan's predecessor left without telling anyone and dist. 21 was left without representation for a full quarter. It died in house judiciary

SB496 IDENTIFY AGENCIES FAILING TO MEET STANDARDS - died in first committee and will be brought back. It will identify agencies that are failing in their standards and it will allow for the budgeting to be evaluated. CYFD is chronically late on reporting and very delinquent on their reports.

- Several bills to support attracting and retaining doctors that did not pass, but will be coming back. Nothing done on Juvenile code, which needs to be addressed.

NicoleforNM.com register for her newsletter, learn more about Nicole, contact her or her aid.

Senator Heather Berghmans, Dist. 15

District Boundaries: N. Border is Burlison south to i40. Wyoming west to i25. Points at the Big Eye.

Maternal care and early childhood is her main focus and passion.

NM finance authority is like a State bank that can distribute funds. Entity that can distribute to programs across the state. Underutilized child care revolving loan fund that was created in 2003 but was never fully funded until this year. 10 million into that fund.

Sponsored SB175 CHILD CARE FACILITY LOAN FUND CHANGES changes some of the parameters for qualifying for these loans for private child care providers. The changes would make it so caregivers in certain areas could have their loans forgiven.

HB 56 MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENTS FOR BIRTH CENTERS: For freestanding birth centers that assist with low risk pregnancies. Really hard for them to survive because of their pay scales and their structure. This would allow them to apply for medicare reimbursements similar to what a hospital receives for the same services. This passed.

HB 214 DOULA CREDENTIALING & ACCESS ACT birthing assistant that is not a medical provider and making it more available for those that need/want it. NM has in place for medicaid to reimburse Doulas, but they were missing the act for credentialing act Doula's receive a certificate, so they can bill for medicaid reimbursement. This passed.

HB267 HOUSING APPLICATION FEES apartment complex, large multi family units, and private renters. If they are advertising they have to be transparent about their fees. They have to advertise all their fees upfront and there can not be any surprise fees.

SB 343 **TEACHER SALARY RATES CHANGES** & HB 156 **INCREASE EDUCATIONAL SALARIES** Education salary increase. 5k pay increase for each level of teacher licensure.

Sponsored SB 283 **CYFD & USE OF FEDERAL BENEFITS** State government gets funds from the federal gov. for each kid in the care of the state (2100 kids in NM) and they were putting it in a pot and instead of distributing it to each kid individually. This bill will make it so CYFD must distribute the funds to each kid.

Proud of the bipartisan support on this bill.

Worked on **Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) program** - add more accountability and strengthen the program for substance abuse exposed newborns

SB42 **COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY** - went through a lot of changes and ended up with 4 / 5 bills inside it but all aimed at CYFD reforms and should make a difference.

- State agencies: regulate massage parlors. Regulate similar to barber shops or hair salons where each of the booths can be rented but the entire establishment is regulated. This did not really go anywhere.
- Passionate for getting legislature's full time pay. NM is the last state that does not have time pay, they receive per diem while in session. The constitution would need to be amended.
- Capital outlay to NDBMC pool, Erma Ferguson Library, and Funding for police and firefighters.

HB 295 **TAX ON PROPERTY OWNED BY NM RETA** green energy investment - transmission lines being built across NM and we want to make sure the companies that are companies continue their investments here in NM

Representative Nicole Chavez, Dist. 31

District Boundaries: Freeway to Paseo, everything north of Paseo to the foothills. Eubank to Academy up to the foothills. High Desert, Sandia Heights, Tanoan East, and Quail Springs.

Main Focus Crime: should feel safe sending our kids to school, going to the grocery stores, and putting gas in our cars. Nicole ran because her son was a victim of a drive by shooting the Summer before his senior year of HS.

Co-sponsor HB 134- **DELINQUENCY ACT CHANGES** it died in the first committee. The idea was this would be the biggest thing that we could do for juvenile crime in this state. It took the age from 15 to 14 for violent crime. 1st & 2nd degree homicide, manslaughter, and rape - the 4 most violent crimes. This would give Judges the ability to treat them like adults. It would also give the Judge the ability to give them a hearing, so the judge could decide if they can treat the juvenile as an adult or treat them as a juvenile and only hold till they are 21.

Life sentence in NM is only 30 years, max. Two years ago a second chance bill was passed for Juveniles making the sentences 15, 20, 25 years based on the crime and severity. Rep. Chavez is passionate in rehabilitation while incarcerated, they should be given education and vocational training. Rep. Chavez is working hard for tax incentives for business owners that will hire people once they are released. Train them while they are incarcerated, hire them when they are out. If they don't know anything other than crime, they will go back and have a higher chance of repeat offenses. Currently Bernalillo county has 32 Juveniles behind bars for homicide. She spoke about the CYFD issues, the 7 & 9 year olds that were just found playing with a gun like a toy. The state has been to that house over 50 times and nothing has been done.

Number one thing is How do we fix juvenile crime?

HB 165 **DENIAL OF BAIL HEARINGS & PRESUMPTIONS** There are some criminals that just do not need to be given bail, based on the severity of the crime. The loop hole would give the judges the ability to revoke bail if they reoffend while out. Did not receive a hearing.

SB17 **PAROLE & PAROLE BOARD CHANGES** - Not only what they do to get there, but what have they done while behind bars to get out. Giving victims a voice, and for their hearing and release dates not doing it on the victims birthday day or death day. This date is used as the anniversary of the crime, hearing dates, or the release day. Leaving this date as a date for the victims and not as a hearing day. **This passed but was vetoed.** Governor vetoed it because it took out her ability to remove someone from the parole board, this would just modernize it, all boards created now have this language and that is just what they were trying to do with the Parole board and the governor vetoed it.

HB345 - **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT** - identify a solution for people that are incompetent and have real behavioral health issues.

Capital Outlay - 1 million dollars given to NDBMC pool, All schools in our district- Double Eagle, La Cueva, Desert Ridge, North Star, APD and AFD for vehicles.

Representative Kathleen Cates, Dist. 44

Boundary Districts: All of Corrales, parts of Rio Rancho East of River to I25 but North of Paseo Del Norte. West of I25 north of Paseo Del Norte up to Edith.

- Capital outlay funds given to Ray Chavez Community Center, Balloon Fiesta Park, Balloon Fiesta Museum, Alameda Drain project (around 2nd St.), Alameda little league fields.

Public safety and housing- 60 day session was heavily focused on crime package and behavioral health. 6 crime bills and 3 behavioral health changes. All 9 were signed in the first 30 days.

HB38 - **POSSESSION OF WEAPON CONVERSION DEVICE** - prohibits ownership or sale of gun conversion packages, it is a piece of "plastic" that converts a glock to fully automatic. It is a felony to convert a semi-automatic to a fully automatic weapon. Federal agents are so overwhelmed with other cases and they choose not to charge on this because they are so overwhelmed, so it was bipartisan support to make it a state law. It was successfully rolled up in the crime package.

HB39- **JUVENILE RECORD IN FIREARM BACKGROUND CHECKS** - Juveniles that have committed a felony level crime with a firearm, currently law says they would be able to possess a gun at the age of 21. This bill would change that to you would not be able to possess a gun for 10 years after disposition. **Did not pass.**

HB 120- **ACCESSIBILITY OF STATE AGENCIES** Office of accessibility housed in the Governor's commission and disability. Who do you report a violation to for ADA issues on state property? Wheel chair, sight issues, deaf- Who do you report it to? General services, manager to the building, AG's office, governor's office? All would be correct. Every year the report would be reviewed and determined how we make the State facilities and sites more accessible. Vetoed because the Governor felt that it was her authority.

Rep. Cates prefiled 17 bills. Rep. Cates is on 39 bills this year, she likes to get her bills done early. If you have an issue, you would like Rep. Cates to help you with it, come in the summertime and not in January. She will be less likely to help come January, the best option is to come in the Summer. Office is located at the CNM workforce training center.

Until 2016 there was not a women's bathroom in the House of Representatives - For 108 years, if you were a female representative, you had to risk missing your vote to run to the Senate side to use the restroom and now we have the largest female Legislation in the Country. There is now a women's bathroom in the House of Representatives.

Standing committees

Agricultural Water & Safety Committee - she is the vice Chair. What are you most proud of? We have passed and funded more water related bills this 2025 session than ever before.

Representative Marian Matthews, Dist. 27

District Boundaries: South of Paseo Del Norte i25 frontage North side- Eubank goes South to Juan Tabo- encompasses Eisenhower middle school, hits Montgomery.

- Two big issues for Rep. Matthews - Juvenile Crime and Human Trafficking

Attended Kick off for Ride of Silence- Memorial ride for those who have been injured or killed in bicycle accidents. Because of her passion for fixing juvenile crime, and the recent allegations that an 11 year old stole a car, with other kids, and intentionally ran over and killed a man on a bicycle. Rep. Matthews was building support and a coalition for bipartisan support for a crime bill in a future session.

HB 442- MOBILE HOME RENT STABILIZATION - Rent issue, utility issue, and selling of the parks themselves. Did not pass.

HB 86 - HUMAN TRAFFICKING CHANGES - sponsored bill for the last two years. NM needs to have reform in these laws. .

Worked a lot on healthcare - sponsor of interstate compact- Allowing people to be seen through televisits from Doctors in other states. Many of them are specialists that we do not have in our state and will not due to our size. Died in Senate Judiciary, intentionally added provisions to the compact so that the compact people would not allow NM to join.

One of the main priorities NDBMC pool. Rep. Matthews raised another 4 million plus for the pool. They did have to make some cuts to the project, like the outdoor pool for now, but the project is moving forward.

Disappointments - that the medical malpractice statutes that were introduced were never even scheduled for a committee hearing.

Water - Made some substantial progress on water, she is also on the Water committee for 6 years. This was the first year that we acknowledged that we are going to run out of water if we do not get our act together.

Map the aquifers throughout the state. We do not know where they all are, how big they all are or how much they can all hold. They are also giving money to the appropriate universities in order to know what to do with the water once we find it. So we can use it the right way.

Representative Elizabeth Diane Torres-Velasquez, Dist. 30

District Boundaries: San Antonio to Montgomery, Louisiana to Belrose. Then at Comanche it goes to Pennsylvania. From Eubank to the Freeway. Does not include Academy but it does include the Whole Foods Shopping center on Wyoming basically in the area around the Arroyo Del Oso golf course.

Served on House Legislation for education.

Main focuses were: Health, Crime, Education

First piece of legislation was a Memorial - memorials in NM can either pay tribute or take an action. It came at the request of her previous Dean. Retired UNM professor as of January. Former Dean had passed away.

- 24 bills sponsored, 1 house joint resolution, 4 co-sponsored House Bills, 1 Senate Bill, and 1 House Memorial.
- 2 bills had to do with the environment, 5 bills having to do with medical providers or health, 3 had to do with CYFD, 3 with crime, 1 was the tribute, and a lot with education.

Rep. Torres-Velasquez served on House Legislation for education and House Labor, Veterans and military affairs.

Nurses are seeing a lot of retaliation when reporting things they are seeing. There is a Safe harbor act- if something is seen in their practice, they can report it and no retaliation can happen. Rep. Torres-Velasquez wrote this with the nurses association. It passed unanimously in the House Health Committee and it died in the house Judiciary.

Another Priority is to provide funding for students that want to study behavioral health.

Best practices for getting help from Legislators:

Importance of getting the information to the Reps. as early as possible. They need time to build a coalition to get these bills passed. Another big reason is the Financial piece, if the bill is going to require funding they have to make sure the money is allocated in legislative finance committee or it won't go anywhere.

Committees are starting now, by August a skeleton of the budget will be made and by October certainly the budget will be done. By January it is too late to put money into the budget, unless there is an entire coalition behind it.

Disappointments - Bill that was written by a group of advocates for kids with behavioral disorders. The work that they had done was approved through a memorial that was approved last year, but what happened was some of the language was missing. The concepts were very important for the families of children with

autism. They were finding out that while their kids could not talk there were indications and they were finding out from other people that there were things happening to their kids as punishments at school.

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/> Will have the list of bills that were proposed.

Q&A:

Q: There are 4 bills that were passed over the last couple of years regarding water but they did not get funded. Why pass a bill and not fund it?

A: Kathleen Cates: In January 2024 NM Tech along with the Interstream Commission published a 50 year water report and it states that NM will have 25% less water in 50 years. The Aquifer mapping was partially funded, you can't plan unless you measure first. Part of the reason that Tesuque will not be getting water in their irrigation ditches is because of the compact obligations NM has with Tribes. We did not get enough snowpack this year.

Q: Your bills that you sponsored or co-sponsored were shot down, many of them were shot down. When trying to get a bill passed, what is the process? What are the steps from start to finish on getting the bills passed.

A: Kathleen Cates: I offer a class on how to pass a bill. It is non-partisan and it is offered to schools and churches and talks about the entire process and she would be willing to come back and teach the class to the coalition. For perspective, there were 1,256 Bills that were introduced and 178 bills were signed by the Governor.

Representative Marian Matthews, Dist. 27 - marian.matthews@nmlegis.gov

Senator Heather Berghmans, Dist. 15- heather.berghmans@nmlegis.gov

Senator Nicole Tobiassen, Dist. 21- nicole.tobiassen@nmlegis.gov

Representative Elizabeth Diane Torres-Velasquez, Dist. 30- diane.torres-velasquez@nmlegis.gov

Representative Nicole Chavez, Dist. 31- nicole.chavez@nmlegis.gov

Representative Kathleen Cates, Dist. 44- Kathleen.Cates@nmlegis.gov

This is the list of Representatives, you can also find all their aide's information and office information.

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Members/Legislator_List?T=R

This is the list of Senators, you can also find all their aide's information and office information.

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Members/Legislator_List?T=S

Meeting adjourned by Lorna Howerton @ 8:27pm

Next Meeting will be June 18, 2025 @ 6:30pm

