

New Mexico Voters Want to See Reform to the State’s Redistricting Process to Increase Competition and Transparency

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For immediate release

Albuquerque, New Mexico – New Mexicans want a redistricting process they can trust, finds a new survey released by the UNM Center for Social Policy. The poll of 500 random sample registered and likely voters in New Mexico revealed a desire for more competitiveness, transparency, engagement with tribal nations, and overall public involvement in the redistricting process.

The 2020 New Mexico Redistricting Survey is aimed at providing policymakers, advocates, and the wider public with valuable information about how the electorate in New Mexico views the redistricting process and which reforms they would support if considered by the legislature. The data was shared with a recently convened statewide redistricting task force of experts that will release its own platform of recommended reforms next month. (The task force is facilitated by the nonpartisan organization, New Mexico First.)

Funded by a grant from the Thornburg Foundation, the survey offers tangible proof that voters will be watching the upcoming redistricting process closely. “According to the survey, the public wants to be more involved in the upcoming redistricting process and supports approaches that other states are taking to make the process more fair and engage residents in the process,” said Heather Balas, Thornburg Foundation Policy Officer.

Some of the major findings from the survey include:

- **The public wants more political competitiveness.** The majority of New Mexicans polled prefer advancing political competitiveness in the creation of districts so that no single party has an advantage. In fact, nearly twice as many New Mexicans favor the use of objective criteria to draw new maps, even if that means some lawmakers might lose their seats or face greater competition.
- **Voters want more transparency in the process,** as a robust 89% of respondents indicate that it is important (57% very important) that all redistricting meetings be held in public.
- **New Mexicans want a say.** Voters are highly supportive of using public hearings to allow the public to provide comments on maps created by a combination of experts and community members, with high support regardless of whether the medium is to have these conducted in person or online. The public is also hungry for education on how this process works and how people can get involved.

- **There is strong support to engage young people and tribal nations in the process.** In the case of tribes, the public would like to ensure that sovereign nations are not only invited to give input, but that their input receives true consideration.
- **The public wants new laws.** A robust 93% of respondents believe it is important for New Mexico to consider implementing new laws in the future, one example being the creation of an independent redistricting commission. With 50% of the electorate indicating that it is “very important” to consider new laws to reform redistricting, the survey suggests a sense of urgency from the public to consider new laws to improve the way in which maps are created in New Mexico.

The survey was developed by Dr. Gabriel Sanchez, Director of the UNM Center for Social Policy and a Professor of Political Science, in consultation with a national advisory board that provided input on the content of the study. "The survey makes clear that voters in New Mexico want to see more transparency in the redistricting process and districts created that increase competitiveness in our elections. We are coming off an election with a nearly record turnout despite the presence of a health pandemic; the community is interested in being more engaged in the political decisions that impact their lives, including redistricting," said Dr. Sanchez.

Survey Methodology

Latino Decisions, under contract with the UNM Center for Social Policy, randomly interviewed 500 registered voters in New Mexico who are proven likely voters. Interviews were conducted online with respondents randomly drawn from a database of registered voters who were screened for past voter participation. The study was conducted between 8/4/2020 and 9/1/2020, and results were weighted to known population characteristics using the Current Population Survey. The nominal margin-of-error for the poll is 4.3%. Respondents could take the survey in either English or Spanish, and the average time for survey completion was 12 minutes. The survey was designed to not only gather attitudes about redistricting in New Mexico, but to educate the respondents on this process. Respondents were therefore given background information on each issue they were queried, including links to the current maps for the state.

The topline results of the survey and full discussion of results are provided in the report [available here](#).

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