



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Voting Options in the June 2 Primary

Special Session Update

4.15.20

JUNE 2 PRIMARY

The New Mexico Supreme Court has ruled that the upcoming June 2 primary in New Mexico cannot be conducted solely via mail, but that doesn't rule out your option to vote by mail. Every registered voter in New Mexico has the right to request an absentee ballot and you don't need a reason.

You still have the option vote in person on June 2 or to vote early. Check with your county clerk to determine when and where early voting will be taking place.

In late March a total of 27 New Mexico county clerks petitioned the state Supreme Court for an order to conduct the primary by mail due to concerns over the spread of coronavirus. The Republican Party of New Mexico filed a suit to block the effort saying there would be a lack of security in the mail ballot process. The New Mexico Supreme Court, meeting via video conferencing, voted unanimously that state law does not allow ballots to be sent automatically to eligible voters. To do so, they concluded, would require a change to the state law.

If you wish to maintain social distancing, and to ensure your vote is counted, you need to request your ballot as soon as possible. You simply need to be a registered voter and to be aware of the upcoming deadlines. Also, make sure your current mailing address matches your voter registration to ensure delivery.

You can contact your local county clerk (most, if not all, have websites that will have the information) or, go to the New Mexico Secretary of State's website which has information on how you can register or update your voter registration online. To register you will need your current or expired New Mexico state I.D. or driver's license.

Here's the link: <https://portal.sos.state.nm.us/OVR/WebPages/InstructionsStep1.aspx>

May 28 is the deadline to request an absentee ballot for the June 2 primary. The direct link to get an absentee ballot via the Secretary of State is here: <https://www.sos.state.nm.us/2020/03/16/faq-absentee-voting-for-the-2020-primary-election/>

The absentee ballot may be returned by mail to your county clerk's office so that reaches their office before June 2. It can also be hand delivered in-person to the county clerk's office or an election day polling location no later than 7 p.m. on June 2.



SPECIAL SESSION

The Governor has not yet set a date for a special session of the New Mexico Legislature needed to adjust state budgets negatively impacted by lower oil prices and the economic downturn as a result of the coronavirus.

Oil production in New Mexico generates big dollars for state government and lower prices for oil means a big reduction for the state's coffers. Lawmakers will be faced with reducing the budget and/or increasing revenues via other funding sources. John Arthur Smith, chair of the Senate Budget Committee, said New Mexico faces hard choices.

Also pending is exactly how legislators will meet. Because of the pandemic issue Brian Egolf, Speaker of the House, favors doing business via the internet. However, questions remain on the availability of internet access in rural areas and whether it is constitutional to have a "virtual" session. The state constitution requires that the legislature hold its sessions at the "seat of government". The seat of government is Santa Fe, New Mexico.