

Q&A: Senate District 38 Mary Kay Papen

- **Name:** Mary Kay Papen
- **Political Party:** Democratic
- **Occupation:** Retired
- **City of Residence:** Las Cruces
- **Relevant Experience:** 20 years in the NM Senate. Currently Pro Tempore of the NM Senate. Also, currently chairwoman of the Senate Presidents Forum
- **Education:** NMSU: Bachelor's in Agriculture. Double minor: biology & history
- **Campaign Website:** www.marykaypapenm.com

What steps should the Legislature take to ensure New Mexico has a balanced budget amid falling oil prices and an economic downturn prompted by the coronavirus outbreak?

The Legislature has been fiscally responsible over the years. We must continue that practice.

What more, if anything, should the Legislature do to address a court ruling that found New Mexico is failing to provide a sufficient education to all students?

The state of NM is complying with the court order from the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit. The Legislature is working closely with the Secretary of Education. We must continue to look at all results, including ESL learners.

What changes, if any, should New Mexico make to its gross receipts tax code?

Local governments need a bigger chunk of the gross receipts. During this downturn of the economy, this should help with job growth and more jobs.

Do you support or oppose legalizing recreational marijuana use in New Mexico and taxing its sales?

At this time I will not support the legalization of recreational marijuana in New Mexico. However, I will look at all Legislation that comes before the Senate and evaluate it on its merits.

In recent years, New Mexico has steadily increased spending on early childhood programs, such as home visiting, prekindergarten and child care assistance, and created a new early childhood trust fund. Do you support or oppose a constitutional amendment that would withdraw more money from the Land Grant Permanent Fund to increase funding for early childhood services?

I think the Early Childhood Education Trust Fund, which I co-sponsored in the Senate, was a huge step in the right direction for early childhood education. At this time, I do not support withdrawing more money from the Land Grant Permanent fund.

Do you support or oppose opening the state's primary elections to voters who aren't affiliated with either major political party?

Yes, everyone has the right to vote.

Do you support or oppose repealing a long-dormant 1969 state law that outlaws abortion, except in limited circumstances?

I have always supported Row vs. Wade. I do not support late term abortions unless it is for the health of the mother.

Would you support a merit-based evaluation system to determine how the state spends its capital outlay funding? Should each legislator be required to disclose which projects he or she funded?

I would not support a merit-based evaluation system to determine how the state spends its capital outlay. I believe each senator knows the needs of their own district. My capital outlay is always published and open to the public.

Do you support or oppose requiring lobbyists to disclose which bills they advocate for or against?

It is always pretty obvious which bill lobbyists are advocating for.

New Mexico is highly reliant on the oil and natural gas industries to generate revenue to fund state programs, as evidenced by recent oil boom and bust cycles. What are the things you would do to diversify the state's economy and revenue base?

I believe we need to be looking at all opportunities. I believe tourism is an example of this. We also need to do whatever we can to attract new business.

Do you support or oppose updating the current prohibition in the law on assisted suicide in order to allow aid-in-dying under certain medical circumstances?

Yes, I would support this. I believe if you are in an aid-in-dying situation, it should be a personal decision.

Would you support or oppose a moratorium on fracking? And should the state impose additional renewable energy mandates as a way to address climate change concerns?

I believe we should continue to work on renewable energy. Climate change is real. Oil, and gas will not disappear anytime soon. We must make it as efficient as possible.

What steps should the Legislature take to address crime and improve public safety?

Crime and public safety are important to our state. We should put more money and help law enforcement and our fire departments. Our roads and transportation should always be a priority of the Legislature.

Do you support or oppose the practice of legislative budget-writing committees holding closed-door meetings during the crafting of state spending bills?

Each committee chairperson is responsible for their committee. I would leave the decision up to each chairperson.

Personal Information:

Have you or your business, if you are a business owner, ever been the subject of any state or federal tax liens? No

Have you ever been involved in a personal or business bankruptcy proceeding? No

Have you ever been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of drunken driving, any misdemeanor or any felony in New Mexico or any other state? If so, explain. No