

## **The 2018 Legislative Session and Priorities Moving Forward**

### **By Senator Pete Campos**

Although the 2018 legislative session has ended and campaign season has begun in earnest, the legislature's work is not done yet. The results of the session allow us to intelligently plan for the future and fully vet priority issues that will improve life for all New Mexicans. For the first time in several years, New Mexico received some good budget news beginning last fall. Instead of cutting programs and sweeping funds just to make ends meet, we were able to improve salaries for teachers, law enforcement and corrections officers and other state employees. We were also able to significantly increase funding for early childhood education, which should help our youngest residents immensely as they begin their journeys toward better education and eventually better-paying jobs.

We were also able to tackle serious problems like reforming adult guardianship, adequately funding district attorneys and remediating the Carlsbad brine well. Because of work done during the session, the interim can be used to evaluate and study the efficacy of naprapathic medicine as primary treatment for opioid abuse and addiction, consider methods for more attractive and affordable access to vocational and community college education and develop pathways to minimize cumbersome paperwork and stop unfunded mandates in education.

During the interim, we can also consider new topics for the next session. Of special interest will be the promotion of the New Mexico film industry by increasing the film tax credit cap, recruiting more filmmakers to communities such as Las Cruces and Las Vegas and completing the development of the mass media communications complex and film set at Luna Community College. We must also grow New Mexico's productivity, labor force and technology by supporting economic development, tourism and workforce development agencies in meaningful ways, including assisting Albuquerque when it hosts the 2019 National Senior Games.

We will also have the opportunity to examine the needs and wants of our districts. Funding has been approved for renovations on Morphy Lake Dam, which will help to meet regional agricultural needs and encourage statewide recreational use. I also hope to implement designs for a national health center in Cimarron that serves the region, the state and the Philmont Training Center, better known as the Philmont Scout Ranch. I will continue working to improve the capital outlay process in New Mexico so that those resources support our communities in the long term. In both capital outlay and in general, we are ready to bring together the best practices, organization and procedures to eliminate inefficiencies in our state.

Speaking of eliminating inefficiencies, it is imperative that we begin a dialogue regarding coordination and use of Head Start funds, both to maximize their impact and to avoid having to return any unused funds to the federal government. This is true across the state, in both rural and urban New Mexico, and especially in the northeastern corner of the state.

Additionally in northeastern New Mexico, I have contacted Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen about establishing a national first responder center in the area. Other priorities for that corner of the state include highway and road improvements in Las Vegas, Santa

Rosa, Raton and Tucumcari (in part because of their impact on the day-to-day lives of locals, but also because of their impact on interstate commerce in the form of improved interchanges with I-25 and I-40) and a state veterans cemetery in Angel Fire. Renovation of the Janes-Wallace Memorial Dam, near Santa Rosa, will also be a priority.

The interim provides an open setting for legislators, constituents and state agencies to interact and develop new ideas and expand on the work started during the 2018 session. It is imperative that we use this period — while resources are strong and time is plentiful — to carefully plan, make bold and effective long-term changes and build confidence in our state's future and each other. For example, this interim is a perfect time to continue a conversation that, unfortunately, began during the 2018 session: use of Public School Capital Outlay Fund money for improvement of school security systems. I believe this is a good start, but we must continue to ensure that schools are safe. The interim would also be a good time to further explore using technology to improve real-time security monitoring, telemedicine and tele-education. I feel confident that this interim will set the stage for one of the most productive periods in state history for all New Mexicans.

As always, I invite everyone to visit my website, [www.petecampos.com](http://www.petecampos.com), for more information.