



EMPOWERMENT FOR
DEMOCRACY
CANDIDATE SURVEY

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN:



(THIS IS AN EDUCATIONAL EFFORT, UNAFFILIATED WITH AND NOT ENDORSING ANY POLITICAL CANDIDATES)

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Our Process

In the Spring of 2024, staff from Common Cause New Mexico, Fair Districts New Mexico, New Mexico First, and New Mexico Open Elections convened and began preparations for a collaborative democracy survey.

After developing the survey, the organizations distributed it to all general election candidates in our state house, state senate, and congressional races. Candidates were asked for their opinions or if they wanted to learn more about the following issues:

- New Mexico Independent Redistricting Commission
- Removing the prohibition in the New Mexico Constitution to pay state legislators (legislative salaries)
- Extending the legislative session to be 60 days in each year
- Removing the Governor’s Call
- Semi-open primaries
- Ranked-choice voting in statewide primary or general elections
- Increased financial disclosures for elected officials
- Increased disclosure for lobbying activities

As the summer progressed, candidates were sent additional broad and personal follow-up invitations to complete the survey. In July 2024, candidates were invited to complete the survey via a digital fillable form. Of the 170 candidates asked to participate, 37, or 21% responded, which is comparable to other candidate surveys issued by these organizations.

Candidates from both major political parties as well as independent and minor parties were contacted and surveyed with responses received from 23 candidates for New Mexico State House of Representatives, 12 candidates for New Mexico State Senate, and 2 for US House of Representatives.

Candidate Data

	State House	State Senate	Federal Seats	Total
Total	105	59	6	170
Respondents	23	12	2	37
Response Rate	21%	20%	33%	21%

Executive Summary

After the 2024 primary elections, four pro-democracy nonprofit organizations in New Mexico reached out to the candidates advancing to the general election to learn more about their positions and understanding of pro-democracy and election reform issues. The purpose of this survey project is to evaluate where our education on issues is reaching candidates and elected officials as well as to leverage the results to inform interested candidates and New Mexicans about these policies.

We surveyed candidates running for seats as state representative, state senator, and congress people. Of the 170 candidates up for a vote in the general election, 37, or 21%, responded to our survey. Candidates broadly supported the proposed policy reforms, with two exceptions that seemed to be low-information issues where candidates expressed the need to learn more. Several of the respondents indicated that they wanted to learn more about one or more issues highlighted in the survey, resulting in follow up meetings between staff from our organizations and the candidates.

Independent Redistricting Commission

A strong majority, 61.5%, showed support for an amendment that would create an independent redistricting commission, with an additional 25.6% who were somewhat supporting. Only 5.1% oppose or strongly oppose, while 2.6% remain neutral and 5.1% are unsure. None indicated strong opposition.

Legislative Modernization

On the topic of legislation modernization, we asked candidates to scale their support or opposition of establishing salary compensation for New Mexico state legislators and increasing the number of legislative days in the biennium.

74.4% strongly supported removing language in the constitution that prohibits legislative compensation, with an additional 10.3% who somewhat support the measure. A small percentage (7.7%) are neutral, while the remaining 7.7% were opposed or somewhat opposed.

When asked their position on increasing the number of days in the legislative session, 66.7% said they strongly support the amendment, with another 23.1% who somewhat support it. Very few oppose (2.6%) or are unsure (2.6%), while 5.1% remain neutral.

Balancing the Executive Branch by Removing the Governor's Call

The executive powers of the Governor of New Mexico often extend into the legislative branch where during even numbered years of the biennium, legislators must receive a legislative message from the Governor for any bills that are determined to be not germane.

We surveyed candidates on their support or opposition to remove this requirement with mixed results. 41% of candidates said they would support the measure split between 25.6% who strongly support and 15.4% who only somewhat support. The largest number of responses were neutral at 30.8%, while only 5.1% opposed. 23.1% indicated they were unsure.

New Mexico Election Reform

Candidates were asked how they support or oppose measures that would modify how elections are conducted and tallied in New Mexico.

Allowing decline to state and minor party candidates to vote in primary elections received large majority support (71.8%), with 15.4% who were somewhat in favor. Only 5.1% oppose and 2.6% are unsure, while 5.1% remain neutral.

When asked about ranked choice voting support was more evenly split, with 28.2% strongly supporting and 28.2% somewhat supporting. Opposition is higher here, with 7.7% somewhat opposed, 10.3% strongly opposed. 20.5% remained unsure while neutral responses accounted for 5.1%.

Legislator and Lobbyist Disclosures

Our final questions focused on transparency and disclosure of financial activities from elected officials and lobbyists.

69.2% strongly support a proposal to increase financial disclosures for elected officials, with 10.3% somewhat supporting. Neutral responses make up an additional 10.3%, while 2.6% strongly oppose, and 7.7% are unsure.

The highest level of support is seen when candidates were asked about increasing disclosures of financials from lobbyists, with 76.3% who strongly support and 13.2% somewhat supporting. Neutral responses account for 7.9%, while no opposition exists, and 2.6% remain unsure.

Summary of Results

Candidate Data

	State House	State Senate	Federal Seats	Total
Total	105	59	6	170
Respondents	23	12	2	37
Response Rate	21%	20%	33%	21%

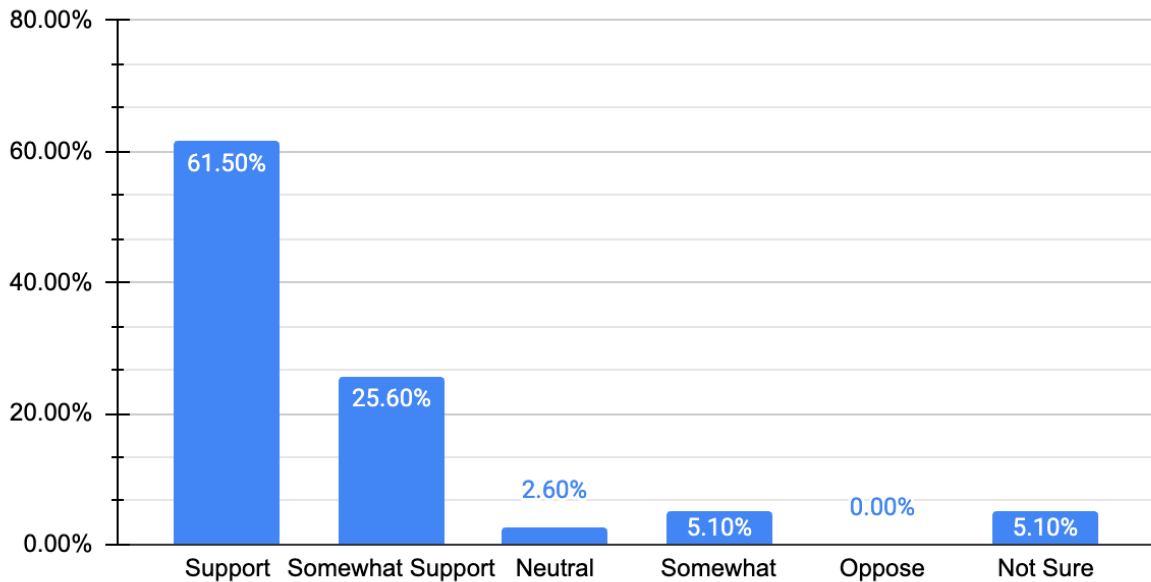
Results by Question (As Percentages)

	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Average
Strongly Support	61.5	74.4	66.7	25.6	71.8	28.2	69.2	76.3	58.21
Somewhat Support	25.6	10.3	23.1	15.4	15.4	28.2	10.3	13.2	17.7
Neutral	2.6	7.7	5.1	30.8	5.1	5.1	10.3	7.9	9.32
Somewhat Oppose	5.1	5.1	0	5.1	0	7.7	2.6	0	3.2
Strongly Oppose	0	2.6	2.6	0	5.1	10.3	0	0	2.5
Not Sure	5.1	0	2.6	23.1	2.6	20.5	7.7	2.6	8.0

Support/Opposition Totals (As Percentages)

	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Average
Total Support	87.1	84.7	89.8	41	87.2	56.4	79.6	89.5	76.91
Total Oppose	5.1	7.7	3	5.1	5	18	2.6	0	5.78

Support/Oppose amending the New Mexico Constitution to create an independent redistricting commission

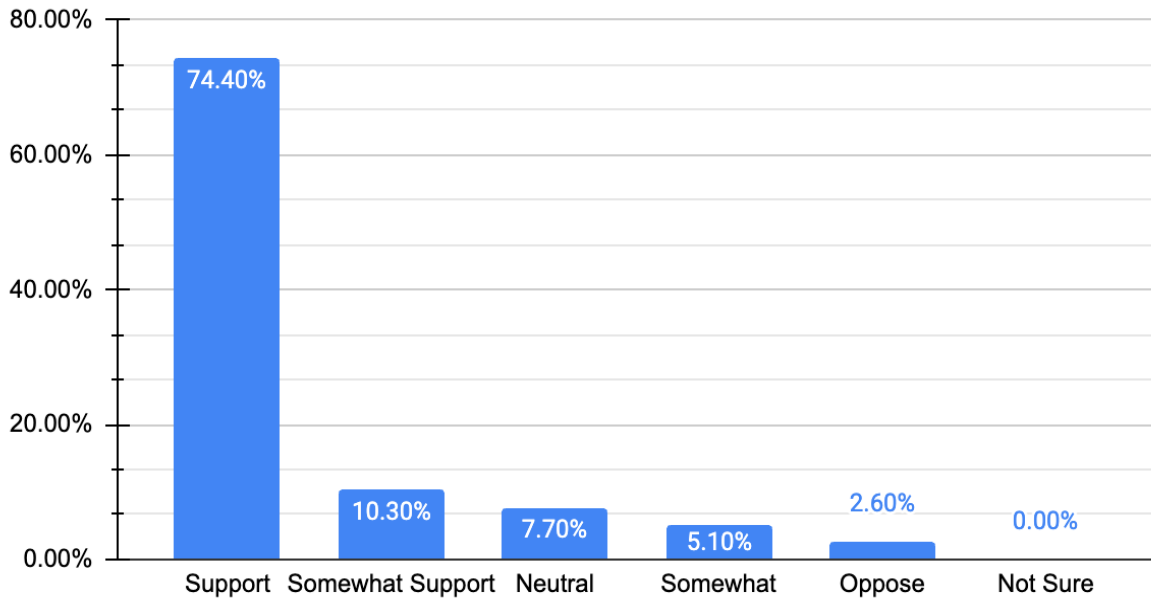


Question 1: Would you support amending the New Mexico Constitution for an independent redistricting commission which would take effect for the 2030-2031 redistricting cycle?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	61.5%	25.6%	2.6%	5.1%	0%	5.1%
Responses	24	10	1	2	0	2

Legislative Compensation

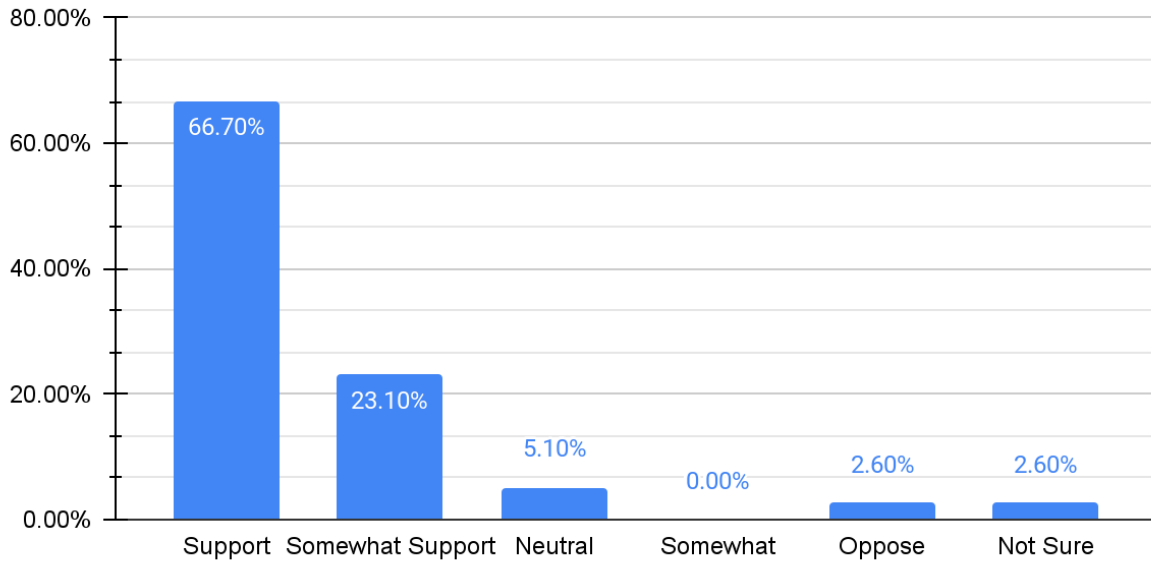
Support/Oppose amending the New Mexico constitution to allow for legislators to receive compensation



Question 2: Would you support amending the New Mexico Constitution to remove the prohibition on legislative compensation?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	74.4%	10.3%	7.7%	5.1%	2.6%	0%
Responses	29	4	3	2	1	0

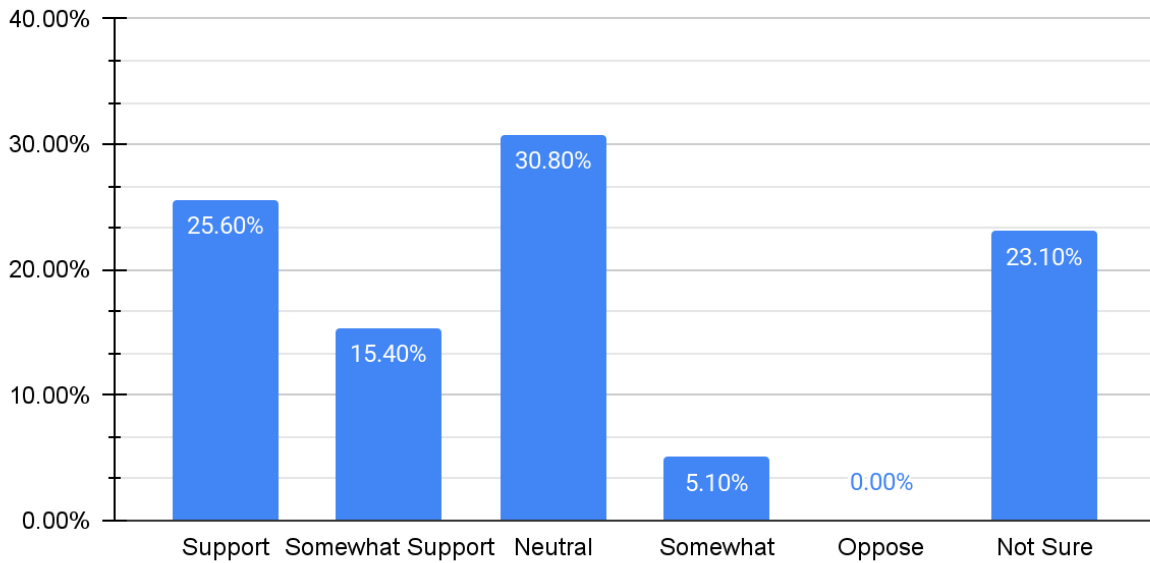
Support/Oppose extending the days in the New Mexico legislative session



Question 3: Would you support amending the New Mexico Constitution to extend legislative sessions to 60 days in both odd and even numbered years?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	66.7%	23.1 %	5.1%	0%	2.6%	2.6%
Responses	26	9	2	0	1	1

Support/Oppose legislation that would remove the restrictions on subject matter

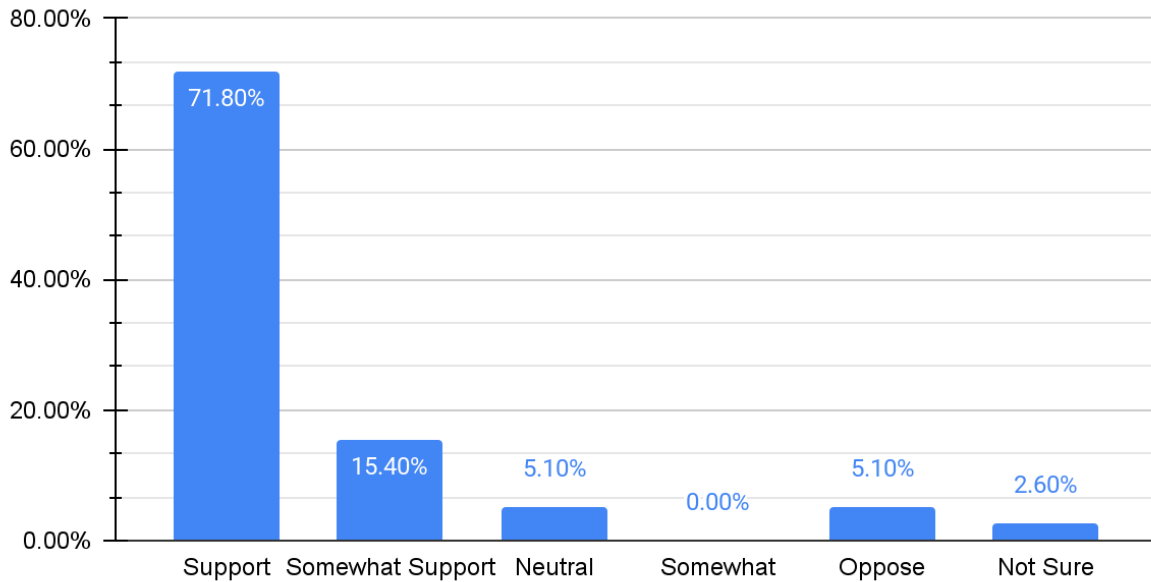


Question 4: Would you support legislation to remove the Governor's call?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	25.6%	15.4%	30.8%	5.1%	0%	23.1%
Responses	10	6	12	2	0	9

Open Primary Elections

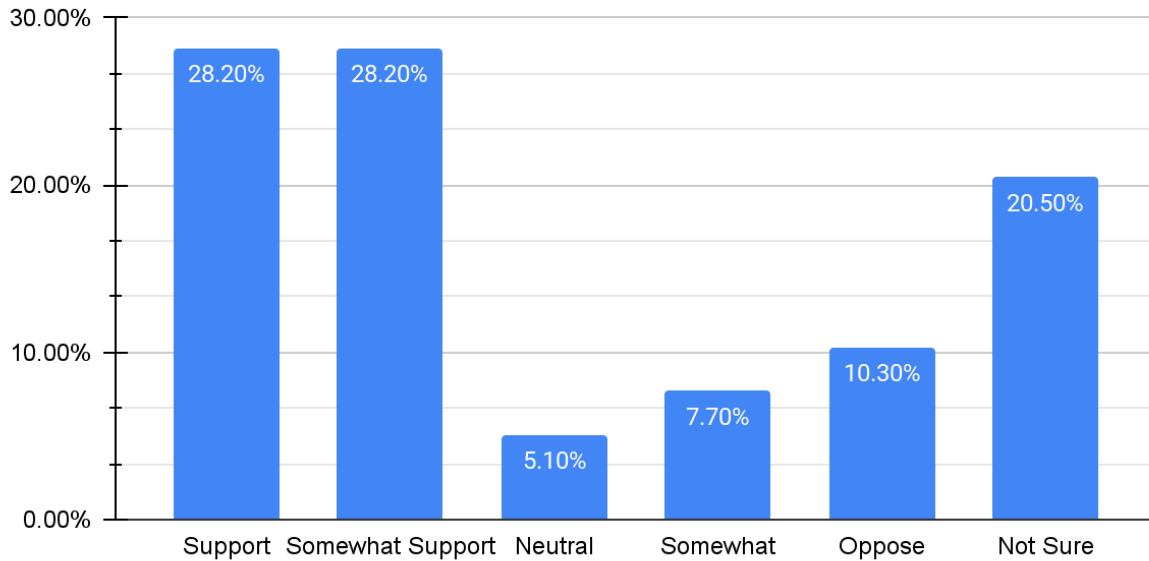
Support/Oppose allowing decline-to-state and minor party voters to vote in major party primary elections without updating registration to a major party



Question 5: Would you support legislation that would allow decline-to-state and minor party voters to vote in the major party's primary of their choice without having to change their voter registration?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	71.8%	15.4%	5.1%	0%	5.1%	2.6%
Responses	28	6	2	0	2	1

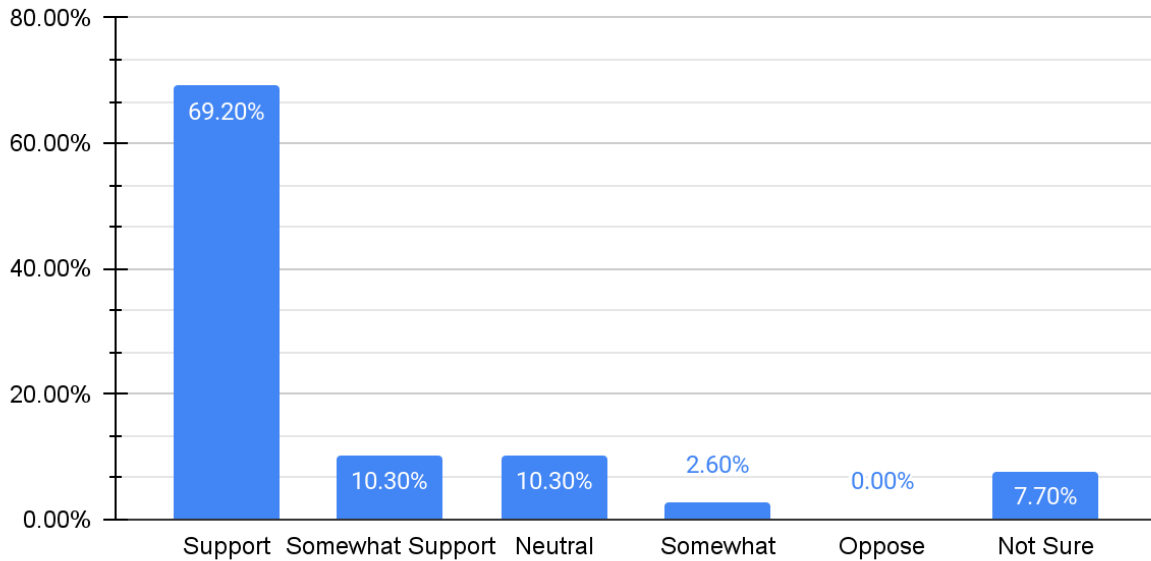
Support/Oppose legislation to allow rank choice voting at state-level elections



Question 6: Would you support legislation that would allow the use of ranked choice voting in state-level general and/or primary elections?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	28.2%	28.2%	5.1%	7.7%	10.3%	20.5%
Responses	11	11	2	3	4	8

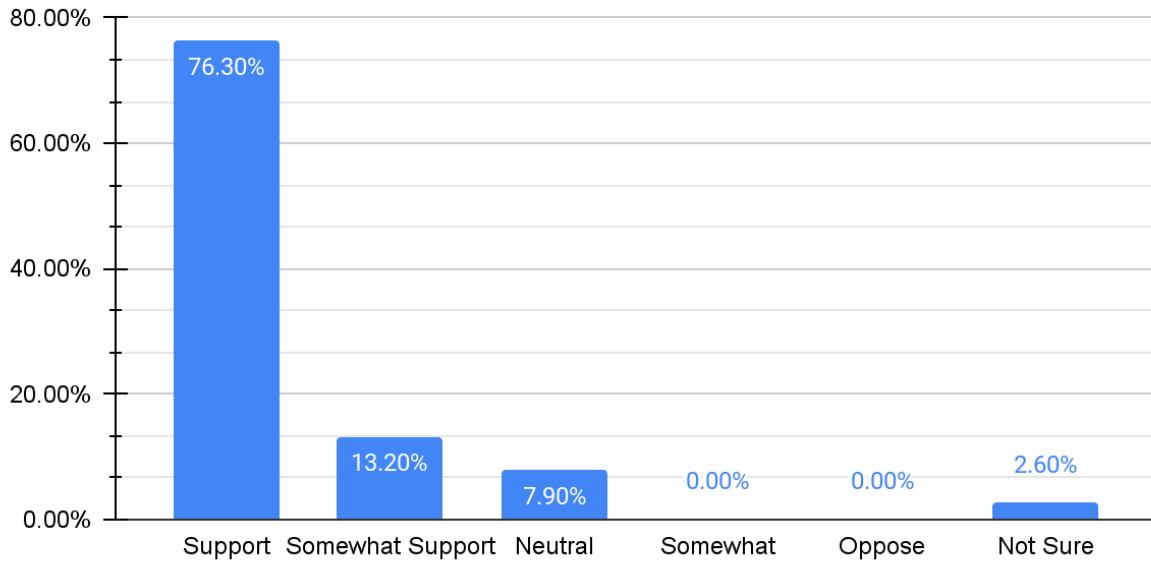
Support/Oppose legislation that would increase financial disclosures for elected officials



Question 7. Would you support legislation that would require increased financial disclosures for elected officials?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	69.2%	10.3%	10.3%	2.6%	0%	7.7%
Responses	27	4	4	2	0	3

Support/Oppose legislation that would increase disclosures of lobbyists activities



Question 8: Would you support legislation that would require increased disclosure of lobbying activities?

	Support	Somewhat Support	Neutral	Somewhat Oppose	Oppose	Not Sure
Percent	76.3%	13.2%	7.9%	0%	0%	2.6%
Responses	29	5	3	0	0	1

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the candidates who participated in this questionnaire. We appreciate their responses and the opportunity to talk with you about the democracy issues and reforms our organizations support.

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN:



New Mexico



NEW MEXICO FIRST
People. Ideas. Progress.

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