

State Senator Dede Feldman's

2008 Legislative Wrap-Up

& 2009 PREVIEW

See Inside for Yellow Questionnaire

*Dear Friends,
Neighbors and
Constituents,*

2008 has been a watershed year. I have never seen anything like it, not just in my 12 years as a public official—but also in my lifetime. The level of political engagement, and expectation is at an all time high, yet the economic crisis we face is huge. Sometime in the next few months we will have a new Governor, Diane Denish. Until then, we're not really sure who is in charge on the 4th floor of the Roundhouse. In addition, this year's elections have swept a new group of Senators into the legislature on the coattails of hope and the promise of change. We will need their energy—and yours—to address the nearly \$450 million shortfall in this year's budget along with a tough budget next year. My survey reflects

this economic dilemma, and I am sorry for the rather dreary tone. But we have some hard decisions to make. Now more than ever, I need your help, so please fill out the attached survey, detach, fold, affix stamp, and send it back to me before I leave for the session on Jan. 19. Or you can drop by my office in Santa Fe once the session begins. You can also call me in Santa Fe at **1-505-986-4300** or e-mail me at **dede.feldman@nmlegis.gov**.

In retrospect, this summer's special session was a mixed blessing. Working families got some help in the form of increased health care coverage for more children, day care assistance, and increased low-income tax credits. Yet the Legislature acceded to the Governor's request for \$56 million in tax rebates, which we sure could use now to address our shortfall.

During the interim I have been busy as the Chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee, examining problems (and potential solutions) to this state's health care crisis. Except for the two bills I was able to pass last session, health care reform failed. But the crisis persists, with even more people joining the 420,000 who have no insurance. Costs continue to escalate. I will not give up, and I hope you won't either. There will be several bills introduced this session, and Washington will soon weigh in. Stay tuned.

The Legislature will also take up some unfinished ethics and campaign finance business in January, following on the high profile conviction of the Senate's former President Pro Tempore, Manny Aragon. The most prominent issues this time will be the establishment of an independent Ethics Commission and a limit on campaign contributions. I will be introducing several bills and fighting for others to set our house in order.

Meanwhile, I will try to keep in touch through my blog at <http://senatorfeldman.typepad.com> and my e-newsletter. Give me your e-mail address on the survey and I'll keep you in the loop. Democracy is a two way street. I'll do my part and I hope you will too. Tag, you're it.

Now more than ever, I am honored to serve you.

Dede Feldman
Dede Feldman



From local farms to local schools: Senator Feldman joins board members of Rio Grande Community Farm, located in District 13, as they deliver fresh produce to APS to use to feed kids in the Valley Cluster.

2009 Constituent Survey Inside ➔

2008 Legislative Success Stories



THE HEALTHY NEW MEXICO TASK FORCE

SB 129 will mobilize the state against chronic diseases like diabetes, asthma and obesity through a coordinated plan for prevention, case management, and primary care while cutting health care costs. The Health Department is working on a strategic plan and will host a New Mexico First Town Hall in April 2009. Stay tuned to my web site at www.dedefeldman.com for more details.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

SB 226, "Insurance Defense & Maximum Coverage," gives a little more edge to consumers vis a vis health insurance companies by making it harder for the companies to reject applicants with pre-existing conditions because the waiting period had elapsed, or the consumer made an inadvertent mistake on his or her application. The bill also increases the required maximum amount of yearly benefits paid by the companies for some policies from \$50,000 to \$100,000. I worked with the Public Regulation Commission and the companies on this one.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Elementary School students in the Valley Cluster of APS will get at least one outdoor field trip to a state park or monument as a result of a \$10,000 appropriation I included in the "Junior" budget bill.

SENIORS AND FARMERS MARKETS

Local, low-income seniors will be eligible for vouchers which can be used at Farmers' Markets in the area as a result of another \$10,000 appropriation I secured.

MISSION AVENUE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Students at the Mission Avenue Elementary School in the North Valley will benefit from a character-building dance program sponsored by the National Dance Institute as a result of another \$20,000 appropriation.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Last year, I was able to obtain \$1.3 million for improvements to District 13 schools, roads, parks, libraries, housing, open space, museums and cultural projects. Public school projects included Alvarado, Chaparral, Cochiti, Del Norte, Douglas Macarthur, Duranes, Garfield, Griegos, La Luz, Los Ranchos, Mission Ave., Reginald Chavez, Taft, and Valley High School. Neighborhood projects included Arbolera de Vida, Silver Gardens Housing Project, Sawmill/Old Town sidewalks, Very Special Arts Center, Los Ranchos Open Space, Rancho Encantado Park, Los Griegos Library, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Garfield Park, Albuquerque Museum, and a Balloon Fiesta landing site. This year there will be far less, maybe no capital outlay available.

The weekend before the Nov. election Senator Feldman hosted two young women from England, Rachel (l) and Ellie Reeves (r) who came to see history in the making. She put them to work canvassing the Wells Park



neighborhood. Both are active members of the Labor Party in Great Britain. Rachel will stand for election to Parliament next year from Leeds; Ellie, a lawyer (whoops, barrister), is a member of the Labor Executive Committee. "The eyes of the world are upon you," the two sisters said of New Mexico on election eve.

Sen. Feldman exploring specimens from the discovery pond at the Rio Grande Nature Center with elementary school students. Thanks to a grant from Sen. Feldman, kids from the Valley Cluster will get at least one outdoor trip to a state park or monument each year.



Soon-to-be-Governor Diane Denish and Sen. Feldman with weatherization partners from Central New Mexico Housing Corporation at the home of Cindy Dominguez, whose home was weatherized this fall. Dede and Diane have been long-time champions of funds for energy efficient home renovations.



Students from the Los Puentes Charter School visited Sen. Feldman during the 08 session to lobby her on a bill about wildlife. Students are always welcome. It's a great learning experience. Call Sen. Feldman's secretary at 505-986-4300 during the legislative session to arrange for your child to be a page, or schedule school trips.

District 13 Questionnaire - 2009 Session

Please check the boxes next to your preferred choices. If more than one person is responding to this survey, please use a different color ink for each respondent.

1. State revenue has dropped in the past year due to the sharp drop in oil and gas prices. This year's budget (2008) now appears to be about \$450 million short, out of a total budget of \$6 billion—a crisis the state has not faced in decades. Next year's revenues will fall at least \$200 million. What should the legislature do to maintain the balanced budget required by the constitution?

Please rank, with 1 the highest priority

- Raise gross receipts taxes
- Raise income taxes on highest brackets
- Reduce tax breaks given to the film industry, alternative energy producers and others in recent years
- Reduce the number of public employees
- Do not implement scheduled pre-kindergarten expansion
- Temporarily cut social programs like Medicaid, childcare assistance, and housing for low-income families
- Tap into the Tobacco Settlement Permanent Fund
- Tap into the Land Grant or Severance Tax Permanent Fund (requires voter approval)
- Tap into the 10% reserve fund (will reduce ability to borrow and respond to dire emergencies)
- Use money from unspent capital outlay projects
- Other _____

2. Which of these programs would you temporarily cut?

Please rank, with 1 the highest

- a. Public safety-state police, prisons, juvenile
- b. Higher education— universities
- c. Medicaid-lower eligibility and lower benefits
- d. Cultural affairs - state museums, arts programs
- e. Water projects and adjudications
- f. Public education K-12
- g. Pre-kindergarten
- h. Other programs for poor people
- i. Roads and buildings
- j. Other _____

3. Tax measures may be part of the budget discussion. Which do you favor?

- A 1% increase in Gross Receipts Tax to increase the school funding formula and provide \$500 million that school districts need
 Yes No
- No new taxes Yes No
- Increased taxes on cigarettes Yes No
- Increased taxes on alcohol, if a certain county votes for this
 Yes No

4. A number of ethics, election and campaign finance reforms will be brought forward this year. Do you favor:

- Limiting campaign contributions to state candidates Yes No
- Permitting election-day voter registration Yes No
- Forming an independent ethics commission Yes No
- Expanding the voluntary public financing system to statewide candidates or district judges Yes No
- Increasing the oversight of state contracting and the procurement process Yes No
- Requiring lobbyists to disclose compensation from each client
 Yes No
- Opening legislative conference committees to press and public
 Yes No
- Increased oversight of the Secretary of State's office Yes No
- Improvement of the Electronic Campaign Report filing system
 Yes No

Do you favor:

5. A requirement that deep wells drilled for brackish (salty) water on the West Side and elsewhere be licensed by the State Engineer
 Yes No

6. Stronger enforcement and increased penalties for Off-Highway-Vehicle riders who damage public and private property
 Yes No

7. A law banning the advertisement of alcohol near schools, college campuses and at athletic events
 Yes No

8. A state law enabling Tax Increment Development Districts on the West Side whereby assumed future increases in gross receipts taxes can be used to fund roads and infrastructure in the development. Developers usually fund the infrastructure themselves.
 Yes No

9. Taxes paid by property owners in the valley area of Bernalillo County account for almost half of the revenue collected by the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD).

Do you feel that you are receiving adequate services from the MRGCD?
 Yes No

Do you favor modest improvement of trails along ditches?
 Yes No

How do you rate the performance of the MRGCD?
Circle a number below, with 1 the highest rating and 5 the lowest.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Do you support replacing the death penalty with life without parole? Yes No

11. Even with the current budget crunch, a number of measures will be proposed this session to provide affordable, accessible, quality health care to more New Mexicans. Do you favor:

- A Medicare-style universal insurance coverage plan for all
 Yes No
- Maintaining Medicaid funding levels Yes No
- A Health Care Commission to continue planning for systemic reform of the delivery and financing of health care services and coverage
 Yes No
- Mandated reporting of hospital acquired infections Yes No
- A requirement that insurance companies allow patients to choose their own doctor by contracting with any qualified provider Yes No
- A requirement that doctors and other providers disclose gifts received by pharmaceutical companies (excluding free samples)
 Yes No
- Changes in the state's handling of mental health and substance abuse services (currently contracted to Value Options) Yes No

Use the space below for any other comments for Dede

Here's my e-mail address. Please keep me informed:

Printing, postage & handling of this mailing was paid for by Dede Feldman, and not done at government expense. Any contributions for this purpose gleefully accepted!

Clip, fold with return address outside, tape, affix 42-cent stamp and mail. Thank you!



District 13 Constituent Survey 2009 Session



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Questionnaire Inside

Happy New Year!

It was a long primary campaign, but after all was said and done, Sen. Feldman got almost 80% of the vote.

Thanks to everyone!!



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IMPORTANT WEB INFORMATION

Dede's blog: <http://senatorfeldman.typepad.com>
for regular updates from Dede

www.legis.state.nm.us for the
official legislative site for
schedules, bill drafts, and
information about legislators

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