



# New Mexico State Senate

State Capitol  
Santa Fe

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## **Constituents Favor Tax Increases – Not Continued Cuts – to Solve State’s Budget Shortfall, but 81% Reject Food Tax**

*89% are Unsatisfied with the Administration at UNM*  
*69% Oppose Relaxing Environmental Regulations to Allow More Drilling*

Sen. Dede Feldman (D-Bernalillo) today released the results of her annual constituent survey, which was sent in late December to 4,500 of her voting constituents. Also, for the first time, the survey was available on her website ([www.dedefeldman.com](http://www.dedefeldman.com)) and blog ([senatorfeldman.typepad.com](http://senatorfeldman.typepad.com)). Feldman represents District 13, which covers the near North Valley of Albuquerque, including Old Town and parts of the West Side and near-Heights.

Close to 660 constituents responded to the 12-question survey, with results still coming in. “Although this is not a scientific survey,” Feldman says, “it gives me a good idea of what people want.”

With the budget shortfall the focus of the forthcoming legislative session, constituents were asked what the legislature should do to balance the state’s budget. With a comfortable margin, respondents selected increasing taxes or rolling back earlier tax cuts over any additional program cuts. Also, respondents were more likely to favor targeted spending cuts rather than across-the-board salary reductions in order to decrease state spending.

Asked specifically about which taxes they would favor, **86%** would increase taxes on tobacco, **84.4%** wanted increases in alcohol taxes and **81.2%** wanted taxes on soft drinks. However, **81% opposed going back to a gross receipt taxes (GRT) on food** and 75.2% oppose an increase in GRT across the board.

At the bottom of the list for cuts were public education and programs for the poor like food stamps, housing and homelessness.

**Regarding Taxes:**

- 88.7% favor a combined reporting tax to close a loophole that allows large out-of-state corporations to evade taxation
- 76.8% favor imposing a tax on junk food
- 70.1% favor imposing a surtax on personal income above \$150,000 in yearly income
- 62.3% favor removing (or reducing) the tax credit given to the film industry
- 54.6% oppose increasing the gas tax
- 53.3% oppose an increased premium tax on health insurance companies
- 52.9% favor removing the personal income tax cuts given across the board in 2003
- 52.4% favor an increase in the excise tax on automobiles

**Among other results:**

- **89.1%** are **unsatisfied** with the administration of the **University of New Mexico**
- **79.4%** **support** giving the same legal rights to **domestic partners** who have lived together for a long period of time (whether they be of the same sex or opposite sex) as those afforded to married couples
- 76.7% favor mandatory treatment and medication in order to prevent people who are mentally ill from harming themselves and others
- **69.3%** **oppose relaxing environmental regulations** to allow for more drilling for the oil and gas industry

Though **Ethics Reform** will not be the focus of the short legislative session, it received a lot of positive responses in the survey with

- 96.5% favoring banning contributions from lobbyists to state officials,
- 96.3% favoring banning contributions from potential contractors to state officials,
- 96% favoring the enactment of a whistleblower protection act and,
- 78.6% favoring the formation of a state ethics commission

**Regarding Health Care:**

- 90.3% favor requiring health insurers to utilize at least 85% of premiums collected for direct services for those covered
- 89.6% want to maintain the current benefits and eligibility for Medicaid

- 89.2% favor requiring insurance companies to offer coverage to any individual regardless of pre-existing medical conditions
- 85.5% favor excluding gender as a factor in charging premiums