

## NEW MEXICO HOUSE DISTRICT 22



**Jessica  
Velasquez**  
  
**Democrat**



**Gregg  
Schmedes**  
  
**Republican**

**1. Describe the specific experiences and abilities that prepare you for the office of New Mexico State Representative:**

My professional background as a business owner, public school teacher, and university instructor has given me first-hand experience in two crucial areas for the state of New Mexico: economics and education. A long-time New Mexican resident, married to a native New Mexican, with school-aged children, I am actively engaged in the East Mountain community. I understand our community's issues and values, and will be a strong advocate for the East Mountains, Edgewood, and Placitas.

**2. If elected, what will be your two highest priorities for your district? What specific actions will you take to accomplish them?**

My two top priorities are improving New Mexico's education system and building our economy. Education, from early childhood to college, needs to be adequately funded. Our teachers and educational support staff need better salaries, the teacher evaluation system needs to be revised, and the costly and time-consuming PARCC test needs to be replaced. Improving New Mexico's economy depends on 21<sup>st</sup> century job creation, a powerful, skilled workforce to fill those jobs, and a modern infrastructure.

**3. Given recent events in New Mexico and across the nation, what would you do to address gun violence?**

Poverty, mental health, and substance abuse are a few issues that contribute to violence, and I support programs addressing those problems. I also support reasonable gun legislation which upholds the rights of responsible gun owners, but which also seeks to keep us safe. For example, gun violence restraining orders courts to temporarily bar an at-risk person from buying firearms, and can give police the right to temporarily seize weapons from an at-risk person.

**1. Describe the specific experiences and abilities that prepare you for the office of New Mexico State Representative:**

My experience as a physician and engineer has taught me how to listen to people and solve problems. I have learned to make decisions based on evidence, which I will do as a legislator. My time serving the sick in central Africa has given me valuable experience working with people of different cultures and languages. It's imperative that our representatives serve and listen to all people.

**2. If elected, what will be your two highest priorities for your district? What specific actions will you take to accomplish them?**

District 22 wants better economic opportunity and lower crime. These issues go hand-in-hand. We must offer greater support to our first responders and rid our communities of drugs. Our local businesses have been crushed by overregulation and a burdensome tax code. Our GRT rate should be lowered and simplified so small business can make a come-back in our district.

**3. Given recent events in New Mexico and across the nation, what would you do to address gun violence?**

As a physician, I will work hard to address mental health issues in our state as they pertain to gun violence. Many of these individuals don't have access to care. We must also address the root causes of gun violence: the loss of value for human life, lack of respect for authority, and broken families.



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**4. What will you do to improve the quality of life for New Mexicans?**

I will work to improve our quality of life by strengthening our schools, building jobs, protecting our environment, supporting public safety through adequate funding and training for all first responders, ensuring quality healthcare in both urban and remote sections of our state, fighting for the best possible care for our seniors and veterans, and standing up for working families. I am committed to a better NM for us all.

**4. What will you do to improve the quality of life for New Mexicans?**

First of all, I will sound the alarm on any corruption and reckless partisanship, so New Mexicans can enjoy a service-oriented legislature working for them. We must expand our private business sector to increase prosperity for all. Perhaps one of the best ways to improve our quality of life is to allow our families to stay together, as people are driven to move away for lack of opportunity.