



## BUILDING BONDS

Lego gathering at Expo New Mexico. **LOCAL & REGION, C-1**

# SUNDAY

January 18, 2026



Gallery show  
highlights Black  
artists from  
New Mexico

**LOCAL & REGION, C-1**



Horsemen  
halt Demons

**SPORTS, D-1**

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**2019**

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham enters the House chamber in 2019 for her first State of the State address, above, and again last year, at right. **NEW MEXICAN FILE PHOTOS**

By Daniel J. Chacón  
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A preview of the last legislative session of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's tenure turned into a legislative pitch last week. Shelley Strong, general counsel for the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department, took the microphone at an annual event hosted by the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce to plug the governor's marquee bill: no-cost child care for every family in the state.

Before state lawmakers from Santa Fe County had a chance to outline their priorities for the 30-day session that begins Tuesday, Strong expressed disappointment the Legislative Finance Committee didn't recommend full funding of the governor's child care proposal and urged the audience to advocate for the initiative.

"We need all of your help to get this incredible legacy solidified for New Mexico and get this across the finish line," she said.

A legacy for New Mexico — or a legacy for Lujan Grisham?

Please see story on Page A-4



**2025**



**LEGISLATURE**  
THE 2026 SESSION

## ONE LAST PUSH

Outgoing gov. looks to cement  
legacy as she seeks Legislature's  
buy-in on universal free child care

# Another fight brewing over medical malpractice reform

Gov. says she's ready to push  
issue as far as special session

By Margaret O'Hara  
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As lawmakers prepare for the start of a jam-packed 30-day legislative session Tuesday, House Majority Leader Reena Szczepanski said she's starting to feel

the enthusiasm.

"The vibes are high-energy," she said. "I'm feeling excited."

While the session will be focused primarily on drafting a budget for fiscal year 2027, lawmakers are nonetheless expected to take up a series of health care proposals, many aimed at ameliorating New Mexico's physician shortage.

Measures likely to be considered would expand programs to train and

retain doctors, and reignite debates on interstate health care licensing compacts and medical malpractice reform — neither of which made it across the finish line in 2025.

Health care reforms will be a major point of focus for House Democrats, said Szczepanski, a Santa Fe Democrat.

"We are really dialed in on health care — expanding access, affordability, supporting health care providers," she

### INSIDE

◆ Insider's guide to session. **PAGE A-5**

said. "That's going to be a big agenda item for us this session."

The issue tops House Republicans' list of priorities, too, said House Minority Leader Gail Armstrong.

A fight is once again brewing over medical malpractice policies — in

particular the payout caps in civil claims alleging patients were injured due to negligence.

Medical malpractice lawsuits provide injured patients and their loved ones with a civil remedy for their pain — largely settlement dollars or jury awards.

But reforming how medical

Please see story on Page A-5

## Pasapick

[pasatiempomagazine.com](http://pasatiempomagazine.com)

### Santa Fe Community Orchestra

Carl Maria von Weber's Clarinet Quintet, Opus 34 and E.J. Moeran's String Quartet No. 2 in E flat Major; 1:30 p.m.; Christ Church Santa Fe, 1213 Don Gaspar Ave.; donations accepted; [sfco.org](http://sfco.org).

**More events Fridays in Pasatiempo**



### Today

Sunny with clouds tonight. High 48, low 25.

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### Obituaries

**Susan A. Shiels Burbank**, Nov. 25  
**Thomas Carlson**, 77, Santa Fe, Dec. 29  
**Irene Herrera**, 88, Santa Fe, Jan. 1  
**Charles Ray Lopez Jr.**, 75, Santa Fe, June 10

**Eve Stryker Munson**, Dec. 23  
**Carolyn Pedersen**, Dec. 6  
**Carmen Quintana**, 89, Santa Fe, Dec. 22  
**Raymond Vigil**, Nov. 11  
**Rita C. Walker**, Dec. 14  
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