

# NM-02 District Primer

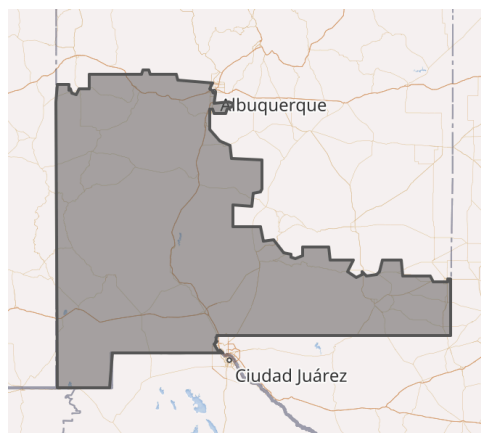
In 2024, Democrat Gabe Vasquez won this seat by 11,032 votes. *That's close!* With a margin of just 5 votes per precinct, we can't afford to lose a single vote. With your help, we're going to **HOLD** this key seat and secure a Democratic House majority in 2026.

Key dates
<b>Filing Deadline:</b> February 3
<b>Primary:</b> June 2
<b>Midterms:</b> November 3

## Recent Election Results

2024 Presidential Election	2024 House Election	2022 House Election
<b>Harris:</b> 130,539 (48%) <b>Trump:</b> 135,451 (49.9%)	<b>Gabe Vasquez (D): 138,177 (52.1%)</b> Yvette Herrell (R): 127,145 (47.9%)	<b>Gabe Vasquez (D): 96,986 (50.3%)</b> Yvette Herrell (R): 95,636 (49.6%)

## District Facts & Stats



### Largest Cities

- Albuquerque: 558,00 (partly in district)
- Las Cruces: 117,000
- Roswell: 46,000

### Geography

NM-02 is in the southwestern part of the state. It encompasses much of southern New Mexico, sharing a land border with Mexico and reaching north into Albuquerque's South Valley. Most of the rest of NM-02 is sparsely populated. The largest city fully in the district is Las Cruces. 30-35% of NM-02 is public land.

### Citizenry

61% of the total population of 710,491 is Hispanic, largely from Mexico, and ~89,000 are foreign-born. The unemployment rate is 6%. 15% of families live below the poverty line. Of residents over 25, 24% have at least a BA. The median household annual income is \$60,933.

### The Local Vibe

Federal cuts are squeezing residents, 45% of whom rely on Medicaid. Rural hospitals in NM-02 are on the brink of closure due to Trump's cuts.

Residents of this heavily Hispanic district are concerned about immigration raids. There are several ICE detention centers in the district.

Oil and gas revenues are crucial to the district's economy. NM-02's wells accounted for 29% of all crude oil production in the Permian Basin in 2023.

The defense industry also plays an important role. The White Sands Missile Range, NASA White Sands Test Facility, and Holloman Air Force Base employ approximately 7000 people in and around Las Cruces.

In October 2025, thousands turned out for a No Kings rally in Albuquerque.

## Key Issues

- **Threats to essential services:** It will be very difficult for New Mexico to make up for lost federal funding for the Medicaid and SNAP benefits on which so many in the district rely.
  - **Tariffs:** Trump's chaotic and retaliatory tariffs will harm many in this district which trades with and shares a border with Mexico.
  - **Protection of public lands and the environment:** The district relies on oil and gas revenues but will need to transition to a renewable energy industry while protecting its inheritance of valuable public lands.
- 

## About the Candidates

### Gabe Vasquez | Democratic Incumbent

**Gabe Vasquez** is a first generation Mexican-American who was born in Las Cruces, where he still lives. After earning a bachelor's degree from New Mexico State in 2008, he worked as a journalist, in public relations, as executive director of the Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces, and as the field representative for U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM). He also served on the city council of Las Cruces.

Rep. Vasquez was first elected to the House in 2022, beating GOP incumbent Yvette Herrell and giving Democrats control of a district that had been a Republican stronghold. He defeated her again in 2024. He serves on the House Agriculture Committee (and its subcommittees on Conservation, Research and Biotechnology, and Forestry). He is also a member of the Armed Services Committee.

**Issues:** In April Vasquez introduced the *Prevent Tariff Abuse Act* to prevent any president from using emergency economic powers to unilaterally impose tariffs on imported goods. In 2023 he introduced bi-partisan legislation aimed at addressing the teacher shortage in tribal schools. He also introduced bills to protect public lands and natural resources, and co-chairs the bipartisan Public Lands Caucus.

**The contrast:** Rep. Vasquez has shown himself to be an effective and hard working legislator, able to get bi-partisan results for his constituents. His two victories over the previous Republican incumbent demonstrate that he has the trust of those he represents. His opponents in this election are all candidates who have been unsuccessful in their previous campaigns.

### Republican challenger(s)

*There are several possible candidates; we'll know more after the primary election on June 2. Until then, we've identified these front runners:*

**Greg Cunningham** is a Marine Corps veteran and former Albuquerque Police detective. He positions himself as a "common-sense conservative" and tries to paint Rep. Vasquez as a radical. He formerly ran two unsuccessful campaigns for the state legislature.

**Jose Orozco** announced his candidacy in October, 2025. After a training accident ended his aspirations in the Marines he served as a DEA contractor. He ran for the New Mexico legislature in 2012 and 2016 and was defeated both times.

**Eddy Aragon**, a radio station owner, talk show host, and frequent unsuccessful candidate for local office, is also running.