Talking Points for 2026 GO Bond 3

General Talking Points

1) Higher education is a "full partner" in the driving New Mexico's economy forward
2) There will be **No Tax RATE** increase if the bond passes. It is not a new tax or an increase in the rate of the existing property tax.
3) For most public colleges and universities, the GO Bond is their ONLY opportunity to receive enough funding to renovate their facilities, upgrade IT and make their campuses safer for students.
4) New Mexico's students need and deserve safe, modern facilities in which to study and learn.
5) Colleges and universities need current technology to deliver courses to students who are pursuing their degree from remote or rural locations.
6) Up-to-date colleges and universities encourage NM's best and brightest students to get an education in state, helping to avert a "brain drain."
7) The GO Bond will bring $351.5 million into the state, creating more than 3,500 construction, architecture and related jobs and increasing gross receipts tax income to state and local governments.
8) Funding from the Bond will allow colleges and universities to fulfill their obligation of stewardship by caring for existing state-owned facilities.

Countering Opposition Questions/Arguments (also included in FAQ on website)

Q: Why should we support G.O. Bond 3 when we're already giving money to colleges and universities through the Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships?

A: *The Opportunity Scholarship, which became law in July 2022, provides money for qualifying adult students to get an education at a four-year or community college. It is available to working adults who may have started and not finished college or working adults who want to complete specialized training in a trade or earn a college degree. The Lottery Scholarship was established in 1996 to provide high school graduates with funding to pay part of the cost of attending community college or a four-year public college or university full-time.*

*G.O. Bond 3 is **ONLY** designed to provide public colleges and universities with funds to renovate existing facilities; replace old, outdated facilities with new facilities; or upgrade campuses with new technology or safety enhancements. It does not provide funds to students. G.O. Bond 3 funds are intended to make colleges and universities safe places to learn that are competitive with public colleges and universities in other states. The funds cannot be used for any purpose other than projects listed in the legislation that authorized the bond question to be put on the ballot.*

The goals are to: 1) maintain the public colleges and universities taxpayers have already invested in; and 2) graduate professionals with in-demand skills who will stay in New Mexico and contribute to our state's future.

Q: Why do colleges and universities need to invest in their physical facilities when more college programs are going online?

A: *Many degrees and certificates (healthcare, trades, technology, etc.) REQUIRE a blend of classroom, laboratory and/or hands-on learning as well as online instruction. Also, some students learn more effectively in a classroom than an online setting, so it is important to provide options. In addition, many public colleges and universities offer meeting and performance spaces to groups throughout their communities. By maintaining these facilities, we ensure those groups have safe places to meet as well as offering events such as community theater performances.*

Q: You say no increase in property tax rates. How are you funding GO Bond 3 without increasing property taxes?

A: The 2026 G.O. Bond to support higher education is tax neutral, as verified by the State of New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration. These bonds are a replacement of general obligation bonds for higher education that are expiring or have already expired and the mill levy, which is the portion of your property taxes that will go to higher education, is the same.

Q: If G.O. Bond 3 fails to pass, will our property rates go down?

A: If G.O. Bond 3 fails to pass, there is no guarantee property tax rates will be reduced, nor will it give the State of New Mexico the ability to use this money for other purposes. The last time the GO Bond for higher education failed was in 2010. After that election, we could not find evidence that property taxes decreased in any county in New Mexico.

Q: How does the G.O. Bond benefit New Mexico's economy?

A: Research shows the bond will create about one (1) job, on average, for every $100,000 in funding in architecture, construction and related fields. Therefore, this year's bond funding of $3,517 jobs. People who renovate or build facilities or provide services contribute to the economies of the communities where public colleges and facilities are in by eating, staying in and purchasing goods and services in those communities. Plus, communities and counties benefit from increases in gross receipts taxes.

Q: Is a college education even worth it anymore?

A: Absolutely. Recent research shows that a community college education returns about $4.80 in future income for every dollar a student invests. Over a lifetime, a bachelor's degree holder earns a median income of $2.8 million – roughly 75% more than those with only a high school diploma. Plus, bachelor's degree holders are about half as likely to be unemployed compared to their peers with only a high school diploma in today's economy.