

Engaging our Tribal and Rural Communities

A Word from Our Chairwoman

Debra Haaland, Apr. 25, 2016

Dear Fellow Democrats,

On Friday April 15, along with some great volunteers from Navajo Country, DPNM launched its Tribal and Rural Community Initiative, which will work to ensure tribal members and rural residents have a voice in our election process.



This initiative will engage our diverse communities by:

Providing residents in tribal and rural communities the opportunity to meet candidates.

- Increasing voter outreach and registration of tribal members and rural residents.

- Holding listening sessions to better understand the issues that tribal and rural communities are concerned about.

- Encouraging tribal members and rural residents to get involved by volunteering, supporting their candidates, or running for office.

Some of you may know that I have worked for many years to increase voter turnout in our Native American communities across New Mexico. While running for Lieutenant Governor, I had the pleasure to travel and engage voters in many rural communities.

I remember on one Saturday afternoon in Carrizozo I met two Democratic women at an estate sale I happened to stop by. They were so happy to see a fellow Democrat. We talked about their challenges with the economy and I gave them encouragement. We have Democrats all across the state and they deserve to be engaged by our candidates and our Party. With a high turnout of Indian and rural voters, we have a wonderful opportunity to bring attention to our local races and win!

I ask what can you do to become engaged in DPNM's Tribal and Rural Community Initiative? Do you have relatives in Reserve or Roy? Do you have time to contact the Union, Torraine, or the Guadalupe Democratic County Chair to offer a Saturday or Sunday to help out with an event or knock on doors?

2016 is the year we win back our State House and increase Democrats seats in New Mexico's Senate. We can all make a difference and reach every corner of our state!

I look forward to seeing some of you on the campaign trail. If you want me to canvass with you let me know!

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Dem of the Week: Nina Grunseth

Addison Flores-Thorpe, Apr. 25, 2016



Photo courtesy of Nina Grunseth

Nina Grunseth is the Chair of the Democratic Party of Lincoln County who has a passion for protecting women's rights in her community. Grunseth is also the Vice President of the Humane Society of Lincoln County.

What made you want to get into politics in your community?

I have been a registered Democrat since I first registered to vote at age 18 in Minnesota. I have been involved in local politics, specifically

with regard to Women's issues and ensuring the availability of reproductive choice. After moving to Lincoln County in 2005, I realized that I was pretty much outnumbered around here, and that many of folks who that think like I do were afraid to have a voice. I wanted to change that and let others know that Democrats exist and that it is safe to give voice to our opinions and values.

Have you seen an increase in interest this election?

Oh, have I! Regardless of which Presidential candidate people support, the chaos and extremism on the right is motivating previously unregistered and not-so-politically-active folks. I know of at least 3 people who have registered to vote FOR THE FIRST TIME in order to ensure that a Democrat is elected. On top of that, Bernie Sanders has been pulling folks out of complacency and into active support. Of course, Hillary has been doing this for years, too.

Are there any key elections you are excited about?

I am really excited about Maggie Toulouse-Oliver's bid for the Secretary of State's office. She is so well qualified and a self-described "election geek" that can straighten that office out and get us back on the right track of encouraging everyone to vote and making it more accessible instead of less. In addition, she's so enthusiastic and dedicated, it's impressive. I also am super psyched that Merrie Lee Soules has stepped up to run against the machine that is Steve Pearce. There are more registered Democrats in CD2 than Republicans and she can win this race! Go Merrie Lee!

How do you think rural New Mexico will be important in this election?

Rural New Mexico is important in every election. That being said, the "Get Out The Vote" endeavors must be front and center for all county chairs, especially in rural counties where voting centers may be farther apart and less easy to get to on Election Day. Absentee and early voting opportunities should be encouraged and we are so fortunate to have this flexibility and choice on how and when to vote.

What do you think is the most important thing for Democrats to keep in mind in this upcoming election?

VOTE. Simple. If we vote, we win. Also, regardless of who wins between Bernie or Hillary, either is better than any other option. Yet, be nice to each other. These are two fantastic candidates and aren't we fortunate to have this choice. Vote Democrat up and down the ticket.

APRIL 23

DPNM SCC Meeting

(12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.)

MAY 2

Luna County Democrats
Candidates Forum

(6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.)

MAY 5

Doña Ana County Candidates
Forum

(6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.)

MAY 9

Los Alamos County Democrats
Meeting

(7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.)

Gov. Susana Martinez fails to mention who she stands with this election

Sonia Gonzalez, Apr. 25, 2016



Photo courtesy of Susana Martinez

NEW YORK - On Thursday night Governor Susana Martinez attended the New York State Republican committee's annual black-tie gala at the Hyatt Grand Hotel.

All three Republican presidential candidates, Donald Trump, Ted Cruz and John Kasich along with other 800 Republicans attended the \$1,000 a plate political fundraiser. Gov. Susana Martinez, being touted as a possible vice president pick, was the guest of honor.

Her address to the room of Republicans began with a joke on how the next Republican nominee should be picked "You know what? Why don't we just play rock, paper, scissors and get this thing over with?" she said, making light of the presidential race.

Now, if that wasn't enough she failed to mention who she will be endorsing as the next Republican nominee. Instead, she stuck to Republican talking points.

Gov. Martinez has managed time and time again to avoid answering this question. And New Mexicans are asking why? Why has Governor Martinez not been honest and upfront about her support? Will she stand next to a candidate that through his campaign has spread hatred and who has outrageous policy positions?

We New Mexicans demand to know where our governor stands and if she will stand behind Donald Trump's racist comments and reckless policy ideas. His "Making America Great Again" message is full of unanswered questions and inconsistencies. On a national platform that is exactly what we have seen from Donald Trump's campaign, his campaign has spread violence and a sense of entitlement.

We New Mexicans know that we do not and will not stand behind his divisive message. And we are not the only ones who feel that way, just outside the doors of the gala hundreds gathered to protest against Trump and his message.

New Mexico deserves to know who our governor stands with this election—Trump's recklessness, Cruz's intolerance, or Kasich's establishment Republican agenda.

Electing Democrats to Congress

Adan J Serna, Apr. 25, 2016

Come November 2016, New Mexico Democrats are not only focused on keeping the White House, but supporting our candidates running for our congressional seats. New Mexico has three Congressional Districts: CD-1 which is represented by Democrat Michelle Lujan-Grisham; CD-2 represented by Republican Steve Pierce; and CD-3 represented by Democrat Ben Ray Luján. New Mexico's Congressional Districts are unique because of how expansive CD-2 and CD-3, both of which encompass almost half the state. Democratic members of our Congressional delegation long fought for a fair wages, protection for our resources, and state investments to keep our economy strong.

Congresswoman Michelle Lujan-Grisham of the First District was elected in 2012 after serving as a Bernalillo County Commissioner. The Congresswoman also served as Secretary of Health under Governor Bill Richardson. According to her Congressional biography, "Congresswoman Lujan Grisham, a 12th-generation New Mexican, has dedicated her life to serving her community, fighting for seniors and veterans, and building an economy that works for all New Mexicans. Congresswoman Lujan Grisham has built a reputation – both in New Mexico and in Congress – as a hardworking representative who always puts her constituents first." More recently, the Congresswoman was selected by her peers to serve as First

Vice-Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Congresswoman Lujan-Grisham partnered with the our Democratic Congressional delegation to introduce a bill ensuring due process for health care providers, in response to Republican Governor Susana Martinez's behavioral health shakeup.

CD-1 is diverse because it covers the urban area of Albuquerque and its suburbs, while also covering the more rural Torrance County. Congresswoman Lujan-Grisham is known for her intense grassroots support and popularity, and is a great choice for New Mexico's CD-1 seat.



Photo courtesy of Michelle Lujan Grisham

In New Mexico's Second District, Democrat Merrie Lee

Soules is running against incumbent Republican Steve Pearce. This district encompasses most of southern New Mexico, making it the sixth largest Congressional district in the country. According to an interview with New Mexico Political Report, one of the focuses on her campaign is income inequality, "a key foundational issue." She also commented on money in politics, "If people feel like there are dynamics going on like the wealthy can buy the government and their vote no longer counts, our very democracy is being eroded."

Soules was also a former candidate for the Public Regulation Commission District 5, which is also a large district of mainly western New Mexico.

This southern New Mexico district is prime to elect a Democrat to Congress because of its large Hispanic and Latino populations. Las Cruces and other towns in southern New Mexico also typically lean Democratic, especially in presidential election years. Many Republicans see this district as a safe seat, however, a Democrat was elected in this district 2008.

Democrats in southern New Mexico are excited to elect Soules to Congress so their voices can be heard.

Congressman Ben Ray Luján represents New Mexico's Third Congressional District which includes most of northern New Mexico. Congressman Luján was elected in 2008 and was appointed in 2014 the Chairman of the Democratic

Congressional Caucus (DCCC). In his tenure, Congressman Luján has focused on Native American issues, energy, and education policy. Prior to being elected to Congress, Luján was the Chairman of the Public Regulation Commission where he worked

extensively to reform healthcare. Northern New Mexico is known for its active participation in politics. This district, in its entire history, has only elected one Republican. In addition, CD-3 encompasses the state capitol of Santa Fe which leans Democratic.

Luján has support from his hometown as well as other rural and traditional New Mexico towns. Congressman Luján proudly stands up for New Mexicans, and he will continue to do so when we work to elect him again come November.

New Mexico Democrats perform exceptionally well in presidential election years, and all three districts stand to elect Democrats to Congress and down ballot this year.

Congressional members Michelle Lujan-Grisham and Ben Ray Luján have an advantage in their Congressional experience and accomplishments, and Merrie Lee Soules has an opening to take back southern New Mexico with strong ground support.



Photo courtesy of Ben Ray Lujan

