

Why are you seeking office?

*I was raised to believe strongly in public service and giving back to one's community. Having owned my own small business; served as a Tribal Administrator; worked as an Administrative Officer for the United States Department of Health and Human Services and having served New Mexicans through my work as Vice-Chair of New Mexico Voices for Children, President of Emerge New Mexico, and Chair of the San Felipe Pueblo Health Board, I felt uniquely qualified to run for House District 28 in 2022. Now, I am ready to return to my second term with more experience and an even better understanding of the needs of House District 68.*

Beyond being a customer, please describe your engagement with your local business community.

*I have owned my own small business in House District 68 for fifteen years, and I know what it takes to maintain a thriving business. I have also held a number of townhalls since taking office, as well as knocked on doors in every corner of the district and called hundreds of voters, many of whom are small business owners, to learn more about the challenges other small business owners face.*

What is the biggest issue impacting "Quality of Life" and "Quality of Place" on Albuquerque's Westside?

*Public safety is my number one priority. I believe that we must keep our streets safe, by fully funding, staffing, and training law enforcement agencies; by addressing the root causes of crime, such as mental health and substance abuse challenges; and by enacting common sense gun violence prevention policy. We must also ensure that our unhoused neighbors have safe, accessible places to live and the resources they need.*

What priorities do you see as being necessary to stimulate the state's economy, grow jobs on the Westside, and make New Mexico a place where businesses want to locate?

*Small businesses need the ability to operate without mountains of red tape, so it's important for us to look at the hoops that businesses have to jump through and ensure that we're not imposing unnecessary and burdensome paperwork. We also need to increase access to capital, which can happen in part through education and networking programs that connect small business owners with mentors and the resources they need to gain investors or better access to capital.*

Public education is critical to our future workforce. In New Mexico the state entirely pays for Public Education, and it is typically the largest portion of the State's budget, what is the primary revenue source of our state's budget and, how would you ensure the continuation of this funding stream?

*The largest source of funding for education is the Land Grant Permanent Fund, which is funded by leases for oil and gas, and returns on state investments. We are very grateful for the recent surpluses generated by this fund, and at the same time, we need to explore diversifying our revenue sources. Oil and gas are by their very nature non-renewable, and can be subject to price fluctuations that dramatically impact our budget and whether we find ourselves in a windfall or a shortfall. The continuation of the funding stream relies on us creating a variety of funding sources for the Land Grant Permanent Fund and the state's general revenue.*

Over the past two legislative sessions one of the most controversial bills for small business has been Paid Family Medical Leave, do you support the legislation proposed? If yes, how should it be paid for to ensure it is sustainable?

*Yes, I do and did support this legislation. This is a win for small businesses, who are typically unable to compete with the benefits packages offered by larger employers, leading to higher turnover, which leads to higher costs--or*

*else they pay for benefits entirely out of their own pockets, which can be incredibly costly. I believe in the idea of splitting the responsibility between the employee and the employer and having the very small payroll deduction enter into a statewide pool of funds that will cover the cost of the paid leave, rather than the employer or employee footing the bill.*

The Governor announced a special session focused on public safety. What are your top public safety priorities?

*As stated above, I believe that public safety requires a three pronged approach. It requires that we fully fund, staff, and train our law enforcement partners. We must also invest into our mental health and substance use treatment programs and ensure we have more beds open across the state for treatment, after our mental health system was completely gutted just a few years ago. Finally, we have to enact common sense gun violence prevention efforts that reduce gun violence while protecting constitutional rights.*