

Grisham visits Community Pantry in bid for governorship

Written by By Rick Abasta Sun Correspondent
Friday, 11 May 2018 09:19



Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham, D-N.M., is running for governor—and she wants your vote.

Grisham stopped by at the Gallup Community Pantry May 3 for a campaign rally to a roomful of Democrats, which included business owners, citizens of McKinley County, and political hopefuls running for various offices.

Rep. Doreen Wanda Johnson, D-Church Rock, was one of the candidates in attendance and she said it was an honor and privilege to introduce Grisham.

Johnson said she witnessed the stamina and hardworking character of Grisham firsthand during the 2017 Navajo Nation Fair.

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Beginning at 4 am with the Saturday parade lineup, the congresswoman walked, ran, and danced the entire parade route while talking to constituents throughout the two-mile distance, Johnson said.

After the parade, Grisham joined the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President for the dignitaries' luncheon, followed by a fundraiser event in Grants and ending the day with a gala in Albuquerque.

"I learned firsthand that our congresswoman has stamina and that she's a hard worker," Johnson said before introducing the congresswoman. "She does a good job and doesn't take anybody for granted."

Taking Pride in New Mexico

Grisham began by acknowledging the political candidates in attendance, including local leaders like Commissioner Bill Lee, Magistrate Judge Bobby Baca, Zuni Gov. Val R. Panteah Sr., and Becenti Chapter President Charles Long.

"When I announced that I was running for governor over a year ago, I announced it at the All-Indian Pueblo Council of Governors," Grisham said.

She reached out and called tribal leaders that did not attend. Her focus on connecting with tribal nations was deliberate.

"We have to start treating each other as equals and we have to start working together in a government-to-government (relationship)," she said. "Respecting tribal sovereignty is something that I have always done."

The congresswoman's boisterous personality excited the audience, which would occasionally burst out in laughter from her humorous statements.

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“We only have 30-plus days to go in the election,” she said.

The election is an opportunity for Democrats to unite and propel the movement to take back New Mexico, she added.

Love for all things New Mexico is her connection with constituents, she said, adding that she was hurt by national news reports about the Albuquerque crime wave, and the deaths of New Mexican youth.

“It’s cathartic for me to talk about how our kids didn’t have a future,” she said.

Grisham said the current state of New Mexico’s government and its governor divided constituents, in particular among the “sovereign communities.”

“(Gov. Martinez) starved our local communities. She certainly divided us. She won’t meet with us, won’t consult, won’t respect (tribes). She was punitive to the legislature. That is not who we are,” Grisham said.

She added that true economic development for the state is going to take investments in renewable energy and resuscitating the diminishing film production industry.

“Whether it’s renewable energy or film production or additional tourism and outdoor recreation, whether it is value-added agriculture, bioscience, cybersecurity, you decide,” she said.

Highlighting her career working with three governors—including one Republican—Grisham said those former leaders all had one common thread: investing in constituents and the future of the state.

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“That’s the state government that I remember and it’s a state that I want back,” she said.

Grisham said she has a unique ability to work across the aisle and cited a current bill she has in Congress with 247 members attached, only 196 of whom are Democrats.

“It’s about building relationships that moves New Mexico toward building something positive for our families,” she said. “There’s a current investigation that is going to give us, I think, \$16 million and all of that money needs to start behavioral health services in rural New Mexico. And who is responsible for the investigation? I am.”

By Rick Abasta

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