

Public servant aspires to be a politician

Written by By Beth Blakeman Associate Editor
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‘Many of our problems are interrelated and intertwined’

Democratic congressional hopeful Teresa Leger Fernandez’ family tree goes back 16-17 generations in New Mexico.

Born and raised in Las Vegas, in San Miguel County, she says what she always wanted to do was be involved in public service.

Fernandez has a public impact law firm. “I try to take on work that improves communities — Native American Tribes or voting rights or affordable housing,” she said.

She said she decided to run for office a week after Ben Ray Lujan said he was running for the senate. “I realized that this district [Dist. 3] has historically been represented by individuals who have done a lot for the state and the country ... I realized that that seat in congress really would have a big impact.”

In listing some of the issues where the federal government and the state are interrelated and intertwined, she mentioned public lands, the national laboratories and sovereign tribes.

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“Federal leadership is important for New Mexico,” she said.

Should she win the seat, Fernandez said she wants to attack the health disparities of her district that COVID-19 has illuminated.

“We’ve always known about the disparity in our health system,” she said. “But the bright light shows it is of crisis level.

“Tie that in with I don’t want us to lose sight of that we are in the middle of a crisis with our climate. We must also address that with the same fervor and intention.

“The impact of COVID-19 on McKinley and San Juan [counties] is a call to action to build the infrastructure, to increase the resilience of our healthcare system — of Navajo and other tribal communities to deal with these kinds of crises, whether they be health or environmental crises, that we may be facing in the future,” she said.

Fernandez also seeks to address the impact of the pandemic on small businesses, invest in infrastructure, rural health clinics and broadband access.

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