

Letter to the Editor: Gavin Clarkson: best choice for all New Mexicans, on- and off-reservation

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 26 October 2018 06:39



Yá'át'ééh,

My name is Sandra Jeff, a citizen of both New Mexico and the Navajo Nation. As a Democrat, I represented New Mexico House District 5 from 2008-2014, and I wholeheartedly endorse Dr. Gavin Clarkson, an enrolled tribal member, for New Mexico Secretary of State.

During the 2014 legislative session, I opposed legislation economically harmful for rural New Mexicans. Vice President Biden supported my principled position based on my district's demographics.

The machine party Democrats vowed retribution for my placing policy and principle over party and for crossing party lines to benefit all New Mexicans. Then Bernalillo County Clerk, Maggie Toulouse Oliver, was part of that vendetta.

Vindictive partisan Democrats challenged my reelection petition signatures, including my Navajo grandmother's signature. Unfortunately, the grassroots in Indian Country was no match for Maggie and the Democrat political machine.

Unlike her corrupt behavior in 2012, when she falsely testified for a political ally as to the validity of signatures that were later proven to be forgeries and resulted in a felony conviction, Maggie dispatched her deputy, a known sexual predator, to testify as an expert for my opponent.

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Normally, the McKinley County Clerk would have been the appropriate witness, but the Democrat machine had been mobilized against me.

Ramon Montoya testified that since there were voters named Yazzie elsewhere in New Mexico, or that P.O. boxes were listed rather than street addresses, the signatures were invalid. Among Navajos, Yazzie is like Lopez or Smith, but the fix was in, and I was disqualified.

Maggie later refused to turn over records regarding her deputy's travel for that hearing despite a lawful request.

She falsely claims credit for Mary Herrera's Native American Voting Initiative, yet Maggie disenfranchised Native voters and continues to suppress the voting power all citizens by refusing to remove Zombies, Aliens, and Canines from the voting rolls.

Maggie weaponizes law enforcement against whistleblowers who demonstrate her incompetence and her harboring of a sexual predator. Maggie even tried to jail a disabled veteran at her most recent debate in Santa Fe.

The clear victor in that debate, Dr. Gavin Clarkson, is a political outsider, not a machine politician. As the first tribal member to ever earn a doctorate from the Harvard Business School while simultaneously graduating cum laude from Harvard Law School, Dr. Gavin Clarkson has the Energy to Empower New Mexico.

His expertise in rural and tribal economic development will finally help the Secretary of State's office to fulfill its duties regarding job creation. He certainly knows more about election law than Maggie — his amicus brief won a unanimous repudiation of her straight-party voting mess.

Although he is particularly well suited to address the needs of Navajo, Apache and Pueblo citizens, Dr. Clarkson will work diligently to help create more jobs for all New Mexicans, regardless of background or party.

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A second-generation Navy veteran, Dr. Clarkson often speaks about his parents, both tribal members. His father started out as an orphaned Indian child during the Dust Bowl days of the Great Depression but became the first American Indian to fly a jet.

Dr. Clarkson doesn't just visit Indian Country during election season, he's been working on tribal economic development his whole life, and his family story is proof that poverty doesn't have to be a life sentence.

New Mexico needs more jobs, and our faith in free and fair elections must be restored. Accomplishing these objectives will require accountability to the rule of law from our elected officials, especially those entrusted with refereeing our elections and ethics. Dr. Clarkson is a man of integrity who is uncommonly qualified to do exactly that.

By Sandra Jeff

Former Democratic Representative for New Mexico House District 5

Winner of the 2018 Libertarian primary for New Mexico Secretary of State