

Sen. Munoz shares Legislative accomplishments

Written by By Sen. George Munoz, D-Gallup
Friday, 04 March 2016 04:56

The latest legislative session is now history; it is amazing what people who care about New Mexico can accomplish in 30 days. When I first campaigned for State Senator in District 4 representing Cibola, McKinley and San Juan counties, I had several priorities that I believed and still believe are important to our families and communities.

Those priorities included providing the necessary tools so everyone receives a quality education, public safety so we can be secure and protected in our homes, and helping people who struggle every day for one reason or another. These are the issues I fight for whether I am in Santa Fe or at home in Gallup. These are the lessons I learned from my father, Eddie Muñoz, former Mayor of Gallup, and the examples I pass on to my two sons.

Before I left Gallup for the recent Legislative session in Santa Fe, I said that the senate would resolve the Real ID driver's license problem. If you check my voting record on this issue, you will see that I voted to pass the compromise bill, allowing the state to move forward. You can learn the facts on how the new law will affect New Mexicans by visiting my web page at <https://senatorgeorgemunoz.com/>

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I am also very pleased that the bills I proposed this past legislative session passed overwhelmingly. The bills I proposed were designed to help many people here in Senate District 4 and throughout New Mexico. Let me tell you what we did with your help.

We strengthened the DWI laws when it comes to homicide by motor vehicle or causing great bodily harm under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Senate Bill 118, which I sponsored, makes this crime a second-degree felony, requiring the offender to spend at least 10 years in prison. This makes our streets safer for you and your loved ones.

The detox center is another crisis that I believe needed fixing. Gallup did not create this epidemic but we must address the problem. You may recall, last winter when 14 people died from exposure, I held a town hall and suggested a shelter to save lives. With the support from Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, We met with Senators Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall, and Representative Ben Ray Lujan, and Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye pushing them to provide a million dollars in federal funding. I put the firm request in writing and they did find a small amount of money for the short term.

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While others claimed victory, I pushed forward finding additional funding for Gallup by tapping into the state liquor excise tax, securing \$250,000 in recurring funds every year. Both Mayor McKinney and County Commissioner Tanner supported my bill, but unfortunately Governor Martinez didn't believe that Gallup critically needed this additional funding and line-itemed vetoed this appropriation.

Another issue of great concern for everyone in our community, especially among Native Americans, is the high rate of suicide. This is very troubling and after consulting with experts, I proposed and passed Senate Bill 250. This will deliver \$100,000 for the University of New Mexico to administer a program that provides culturally appropriate preventive services to individuals, families and their communities, including post-suicide assistance.

I continue to work very hard to lead efforts to reform the state's pension plans. So far, working with the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), we have saved New Mexico billions of dollars.

Our job is not done, there is still much to do. We must continue protecting public education and ensure that small businesses thrive while keeping our families safe. I remain committed to serving the people of District 4 and all New Mexicans.

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