

Ripon Profile

NAME: SUSANA MARTINEZ

OCCUPATION: GOVERNOR OF NEW MEXICO

HOMETOWN: LAS CRUCES, NM

What is your greatest achievement in the 14 years you spent as a district attorney? The greatest achievement was making a difference in the lives of victims and their families and being a voice for those who did not have one. For example, one of my greatest achievements as district attorney was prosecuting and convicting the man who killed Katie Sepich, a New Mexico State University student who was brutally raped and murdered in 2003. Subsequently, I fought for the passage of Katie's Law in 2006, which allows for the collection of a DNA sample from anyone arrested for a violent felony in New Mexico. Katie's Law has gotten results, putting some of society's most egregious criminals behind bars and preventing them from causing harm in our communities.

What issue more than any other contributed to your election victory last Fall? New Mexicans are tired of politicians who refuse to shake up the system and demand bold change. Whether it was securing our borders, reforming education, ending corruption, or making New Mexico more business-friendly to help create jobs, my platform was one of challenging the status quo to end politics-as-usual in New Mexico.

Now that you're Governor, how do you plan to stay in touch with the people of your state? During the campaign, I spent 16 months traveling across New Mexico and listening to the concerns of people who were tired of what was going on in state government. I will continue to visit every corner of the state and listen to the people. But I'm also encouraging people to get involved in the process. We set up a tip line and asked every New Mexican to submit their ideas for cutting waste in state government. I have posted videos of committee hearings on our website and encouraged citizens to contact their legislators. I promised during the campaign to bring the people with me to the Roundhouse and I am keeping that promise.

If you could have Congress solve one problem affecting New Mexico, what would it be? We cannot let New Mexico become a haven for crime and illegal activity because we have failed in our most basic duty of protecting our border and keeping our citizens safe. We are working very hard in New Mexico to secure our border, but we can't do it alone. Border security requires the correct approach at both the state level and the federal level.

What else should the Republican Party be doing to win minority support? As governor, my first concern is creating a better New Mexico for all of our citizens. The way Republicans win support among minorities is to lose the rhetoric and labels and talk honestly about the issues that minorities care about. Issues like responsibly balancing the budget, eliminating wasteful spending, ending corruption, improving education for our children and rebuilding our economy around a vibrant small business community will help create a better life for all New Mexicans and that will earn their support.

What one lesson for success do you always try to pass along to kids? I truly believe that by working hard and setting your goals high, there is no limit to what you can achieve. I grew up in a very modest home and both of my parents worked very hard to provide for our family. They never accepted our financial situation or working-class background as an excuse for anything. I had teachers who taught me to always set the bar high and that attitude helped me succeed. I believe every child can succeed, and that's why we must end the culture of low expectations.