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Fighting to Improve the Lives of Women and Their Families in New Mexico

Women in New Mexico are leaders in technology, business, education, healthcare and the arts. New Mexico women's entrepreneurial spirit is reflected in our having the fourth highest rate of women-owned businesses in the country. We also take care of our families. Nationally, an estimated 60% of unpaid caregivers in the country are women. In New Mexico, over 46% of mothers are the sole or primary breadwinners for their families.

In Congress, I have fought against gender discrimination and fought to improve the economic and health status of women in New Mexico and throughout the country. I will continue that fight as Governor.

We can improve the lives of women and their families in New Mexico. My economic, education, public safety and anti-poverty plans will benefit all New Mexicans, but women, in particular, will benefit because of continuing disparities in economic opportunities and earnings, the scourge of domestic and sexual violence, the unique role that pregnancy and motherhood play in women's lives, and the continuing role many women play as the sole or primary caregiver for their children and other family members.

As Governor,

- ***I will fight gender discrimination within state agencies and across our state.***
- ***I will increase economic opportunity*** through my plans to [Jump Start New Mexico](#), [Build New Mexico](#), increase [Workforce Training and Development](#), and [Fight Poverty](#).
- ***I will increase educational opportunities*** for girls and boys when I implement my [New Direction for Public Schools](#).
- ***I will increase women's safety*** through my plans to [Combat Gun Violence](#), and be [Tougher, Smarter and Safer](#) in our fight against crime.
- I will ***improve women's health*** and to fight to protect and increase access to affordable, quality, confidential family planning and services, and to [Tackle the Opioid Epidemic](#)

A new beginning for New Mexico means a new beginning for New Mexico's women and families. Despite the many successes of New Mexican women, far too many – especially women of color – still face discrimination and other significant challenges that limit their educational,

economic and personal opportunities. Poverty, food insecurity, high rates of domestic and sexual violence, and unplanned pregnancies create significant obstacles for many New Mexico women. A quick review of the data, makes it clear, we have more work to do. Consider the following:

- ***New Mexico's high poverty rates have a disproportionate impact on women.*** Women have higher rates of poverty than men in New Mexico. We rank 48th in the country for the percentage of women (over 21%) who live in poverty. A quarter of Hispanic women in New Mexico (24.9%), and almost a third of Native American women (30.8%) live in poverty.
- ***The pay gap between men and women in New Mexico persists and is particularly large for women of color.*** Women who work full-time year-round earn 83.3 cents for every dollar earned by men who work full-time year-round in New Mexico. Racial and ethnic disparities in this gender pay gap are significant – and disturbing. In New Mexico, Hispanic women earn only 55.6 cents and Native American women earn just 50.5 cents for every dollar earned by white men in our state.
- ***The rate of poverty among older women in New Mexico is twice the rate of poverty among older women in the whole country.*** Although Social Security is a critical safety net for elderly Americans, lower earnings during working years mean less retirement savings and lower Social Security payments for many women. In New Mexico, 14% of female seniors live in poverty – that is twice the rate of female seniors living in poverty in the U.S. as a whole. The impact of poverty and low wages are compounded as people age.
- ***New Mexico women experience high rates of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.*** Over the course of their lives, more than one in three New Mexico women (37.3%) experience domestic violence, one in five women experience rape, and nearly one in five women (19%) experience stalking. Eleven percent of New Mexico high school girls report that they have been physically forced to have sex. In 2017 alone, over 17,000 new domestic violence charges were filed in courts throughout the state. Law enforcement agencies reported that 41% of the domestic violence incidents in 2017 involved injury to the victim. Although not collected from every law enforcement agency, in 2017, law enforcement reported that a total of 6,718 children were present at the scene of domestic violence incidents, and that two-thirds (66%) of the children who witnessed these incidents were not yet adolescents (12 years and under).
- ***Pregnant women face significant health and healthcare challenges in New Mexico.*** New Mexico has lower rates of prenatal care in the first trimester than the rest of the country. New Mexico also ranks poorly (38th) in the rate of infants born with low

birthweight -- low birthweight is associated with increased infant mortality. We have also experienced more than a ten percent increase in maternal mortality since 2016.

- ***New Mexico has high rates of unplanned pregnancies and insufficient access to affordable family planning services.*** The Centers for Disease Control identified family planning as one of the top ten public health achievements of the 20th century. Comprehensive family planning counseling and services enable women to decide whether and when to have a child, which has improved maternal and infant health, reduced transmission of disease, and created educational and economic opportunities for women and their families. Yet, approximately 55% of pregnancies in New Mexico are unintended and the Trump Administration and the Republican-controlled Congress want to significantly cut and block access to family planning services. In 2014, over 150,000 New Mexico women aged 13–44 needed publicly-funded family planning services, yet publicly-supported family planning health centers were able to meet less than a third of those needs for contraceptive services and supplies.

Clearly, any effort to jump start New Mexico’ and build a strong economy for the long run must address these shocking disparities. That is why, as governor, I will

Fight gender discrimination within state government and across our state by:

- Supporting and implementing pregnancy accommodation laws and policies that enable women to continue working during pregnancy.
- Requiring state leadership – from the Governor’s office to Cabinet officials and division directors to local offices of state agencies throughout New Mexico – to implement and enforce laws and policies that prohibit discrimination and harassment.
- Reducing unfair pay disparities by implementing and enforcing the current state [Executive Order](#) on pay inequality in state government and among state vendors. I will build on the groundbreaking work of the 2009 Task Force Report on Fair and Equal Pay for All New Mexicans Initiative and implement recommendations made in 2017 by the Office of the State Auditor, under the leadership of now-Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller.

Build women’s economic security and opportunities by:

- Building on the success of our women-owned businesses in New Mexico, bolstering our entrepreneurial ecosystem and creating a Governor’s Council of Entrepreneurial Development to drive focused strategies to develop small and medium sized businesses, particularly in emerging industries.
- Increasing the minimum wage and the Working Families Tax Credit to help lift tens of thousands of New Mexico families out of poverty.

- Supporting a Child Tax Credit to reverse the impact of the Republican tax cuts that are increasing the tax burden for many New Mexico families
- Supporting increased child care subsidies that will phase out to reduce the “cliff effect” so that women and other workers who receive a pay increase don't suddenly face thousands of dollars in new child care costs.
- Reversing Governor Martinez’s unlawful policies that have reduced enrollment in SNAP, a critical program that helps families keep food on the table.

Increase educational opportunities for women and girls throughout New Mexico by:

- Complying with the recent court ruling that New Mexico must fix our broken education system, including by investing in universal pre-K for three- and four-year-olds, which will increase their opportunities for success and help support working moms who are often the caregivers for their young children.
- Investing in more apprenticeships, internships and more on-line learning opportunities and other workforce development programs that leverage our colleges and universities and partnerships with local employers.

Strengthen and Improve women’s safety by:

- Supporting common sense gun violence initiatives that will keep guns out of the hands of people who are convicted of domestic violence. I will work with New Mexico’s legislature to update our laws and prevent domestic abusers from purchasing firearms. Studies show that limiting abusers’ access to guns can reduce domestic homicides by 25 percent.
- Ensuring effective monitoring of abusers under court order. I will work with the state legislature making it mandatory for local law enforcement agencies to monitor compliance and toughen penalties for noncompliance.
- Establishing a comprehensive, interagency procedure to respond to domestic violence as a crime, engaging the seventeen state and local agencies that play some role in responding to incidence of domestic violence.
- Promoting strong partnerships among state agencies, healthcare providers, social service providers and local law enforcement to help women and children escape dangerous relationships, receive non-judgmental supports and services, and provide appropriate interventions for children who have been witnesses to or the direct target of domestic abuse.
- Increasing efforts to gather and analyze critical state and county-level data related to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking so we can better target prevention efforts,

social services and supports for survivors, and law enforcement efforts. The New Mexico Interpersonal Violence Data Central Repository is a critical resource in these efforts.

Improve women's health by:

- Supporting access to affordable health care coverage for all New Mexicans, such as through a Medicaid buy-in and investment in our behavioral health infrastructure and safety net.
- Protecting and increasing access to affordable, quality, confidential family planning services for all women. This includes supporting laws in New Mexico that protect the significant gains made under the Affordable Care Act for women's access to contraception and other critical family planning services.
- Supporting access to safe and legal abortion. Government should not interfere with deeply personal decisions a woman makes about reproductive healthcare with her family, and healthcare provider. I support efforts to repeal New Mexico's currently unenforceable and archaic laws that criminalize abortion and do not reflect our New Mexican values. I am deeply concerned that the Supreme Court will overturn Roe v. Wade directly or little by little, with the most significant impact on low-income women, immigrant women, women of color and women in rural communities.