

## **Senator Ben Ray Luján:**

On January 3, 2021, Ben Ray Luján was sworn into office as a U.S. Senator representing New Mexico. He previously served as U.S. Representative for New Mexico's Third Congressional District and House Assistant Speaker in the 116th Congress.

Senator Luján grew up in Nambé, a small farming community north of Santa Fe, bordered by the Nambé and Pojoaque Pueblos. It was there that he learned New Mexico values, including hard work, dedication, and perseverance, from his family and community.

Since being elected to Congress in 2008, Senator Luján has been an outspoken advocate of workers and communities ravaged by radiation exposure during America's atomic age. As a member of the House, he introduced the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendments, which would provide health and monetary compensation for individuals who were exposed to high levels of radiation that caused sickness, cancer, and deaths in New Mexico and across the country.

He has also championed efforts to create good-paying jobs in New Mexico, expand quality health care and protect patients with pre-existing conditions, preserve our natural resources and sacred sites, build a clean energy economy, and uplift the middle-class.

Senator Luján has focused on spurring local economic growth through a number of legislative initiatives. His bill to make it easier for local entrepreneurs to bring their ideas to the marketplace was signed into law, and he has written legislation that would leverage New Mexico's labs to drive job creation while addressing tomorrow's energy challenges. Recognizing that action on the climate crisis cannot wait another generation, Senator Luján has been a leading voice in the fight against climate change. He has developed bold, comprehensive legislation to put the United States on a path to net-zero carbon emissions to combat the climate crisis and grow the economy. This visionary plan has earned praise from climate experts, environmental advocates, and labor groups.

He has been a fierce advocate for environmental protection in New Mexico. Luján helped lead an effort during the Obama administration to establish national monument designations for the Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area and the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, preserving some of New Mexico's greatest treasures and tourism drivers. In addition, he helped lead the effort to protect the greater Chaco Canyon region from harmful oil and gas drilling and dangerous methane emissions.

Luján is a long-time advocate for New Mexico's acequias and traditional lands. He continually works to ensure funding for these cultural assets. He also supports rural farming and ranching by advancing legislation to help food-producing communities advance entrepreneurship.

Throughout his time in Congress, Luján has fought to increase New Mexicans' access to quality health care, no matter where they live or how much money they make. He has had legislation signed into law to bolster the Children's Health Insurance Program and strengthen

Medicaid and Medicare. Senator Luján has also worked in a bipartisan manner to secure millions in funding to combat the opioid crisis in New Mexico and increase access to treatment and recovery services.

Senator Luján has been a champion for New Mexico working families. He's fought to raise the minimum wage, close the gender pay gap, and bridge the digital divide for rural communities. He has been an unwavering supporter of women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and continues to advance causes important to New Mexico families.

Before his election to Congress, Senator Luján served as the Chairman of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission. As a Commissioner, he worked with his colleagues to develop a renewable portfolio standard to increase clean energy production by New Mexico utilities. He also advocated for first responders, working to overhaul the New Mexico Fire Fund so that all distributions from the fund would go to improving fire services in New Mexico.

Prior to his service on the Public Regulation Commission, Luján was the New Mexico Cultural Affairs Department's director of administrative services and chief financial officer. Senator Luján earned his Bachelor's degree from New Mexico Highlands University in Business Administration.