

# **Adelante Progressive Caucus: Questionnaire for Candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives from New Mexico CD-3 24 February 2020**

**Candidate: Marco Serna**

## Economy

1. Economic dynamism and wealth creation has concentrated in urban areas while rural areas and marginalized communities have largely been left behind. New Mexico CD-3 is one of the least densely populated congressional districts in the nation. Many of its residents do not have access to jobs, health care or the internet. As U.S. congressperson, what will you do to enhance broadly-distributed economic development and wealth creation in rural and marginalized communities?

## **ANSWER:**

When I announced my candidacy for Congress, I stated that bringing jobs and economic opportunity to our communities would be my top priority. On September 2, 2019, I hosted a press conference and submitted my position statement on my plans for economic development. It is included for your review. Philosophically, I join with President Obama when he stated that the widening income gap among Americans is “the defining challenge of our time.” Studies conducted over the past decade show that the gap between rich and poor in New Mexico continues to widen. This is especially true in rural communities. Consider that in 1979, the top 1 percent of households in the state experienced a 55 percent growth in income while the average income for all other households has fallen by 9 percent (since 2016). According to the Census, 20.4 percent of New Mexico residents live below the poverty line which places our state 49<sup>th</sup> nationally, ahead of only Mississippi. As a proud New Mexican, this is

unacceptable and I will work tirelessly to turn this around.

In my economic policy statement, I listed 16 priorities that I would take to Congress. They include:

- I will only support tax breaks that benefit working New Mexico families.
- Instead of supporting tax breaks for Wall Street, I will support tax breaks for small businesses like my mother's that are the driving force for jobs in our community.
- I support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.
- I will never vote to cut funding for Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare.
- I believe in equal pay for equal work. Women still, on average, only earn 81 cents for every dollar their male counterparts make – and the gap is even wider for women of color. Unless we codify equal pay for equal work into law, women will continue to lose billions in wages compared to their male colleagues.
- I support a national paid family leave program.
- I will always support the funding of Education and ensure our teachers get the salaries they deserve.
- I believe that everyone has an inherent right to affordable and quality health care.
- Veterans deserve more than empty promises. I will be a strong advocate for veterans who defended our freedom and represent the best of America.
- I will work to expand and protect the sovereignty of our Native American Tribes.
- I support increased funding for affordable housing.
- I support comprehensive immigration reform and providing a path to citizenship for Dreamers.
- I will work hard to provide broadband internet throughout our rural communities.
- I support equal rights for every New Mexican and stand proud with my brother and our LGBTQ community.
- I believe that we need to invest in our future and support infrastructure legislation that will rebuild our nation's bridges and roads.

- I support taking a strong stand on the unfair trade policies of China and holding the Chinese accountable. However, I disagree with President Trump's tariff war and believe that the best course of action is to unite our allies and collectively force China into changing its trade policies.

I am especially concerned about young people who are entering the workforce. Too many college graduates are drowning in debt and do not see a way out. As a first step, I believe that we have to drastically reduce the interest rates attached to student loans. I also believe that automation will have a significant effect on our economy and that we need to spend money retraining our work-force. It is clear to me that unless something changes, this new generation will be the first one to earn less than their parents.

There is little to question that New Mexico faces unique challenges. With an economy based on mineral and oil extraction, our state is especially vulnerable to the international climate change movement. We need to accept the fact that alternative forms of energy is the wave of the future and start investing in solar, wind and renewable energy. At the same time, we need to ensure that the federal government provides significant resources to retrain the workforce and provide them with a livable wage. I support climate change initiatives, but not at the cost of jobs and economic prosperity for my family, neighbors, and friends in New Mexico.

Lastly, I believe that to bring true economic prosperity we need to unify our divided country and work together for a common goal. As your next Congressman, I pledge to work together with all New Mexicans to make the American Dream a reality to all citizens.

2. Is the American dream dead? Socioeconomic mobility in the US has ossified relative to most other developed economies. Economic inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, is at its highest value in half a century and sits comparatively high relative to those other developed economies. Many Americans, on both the left and the right, believe the system is rigged against them. What historical mix of policies and economic trends have brought us to our current economic state? And what structural changes will you work for to get our economy working on behalf of all Americans (and not just the corporate elite)?

**ANSWER:**

There is no simple answer to the question of how we solve the issue of income equality. Without being simplistic, I believe that technology is the key to our future. The US Chamber Of Commerce recently issued a report “Unlocking the Digital Potential of Rural America.” The study outlines recommendations for how the private and public sectors can help small businesses through technology. On a national scale, the study projects that “greater adoption of digital tools in rural America could add \$140 billion to the US economy by 2023.” It predicts that businesses across rural America could create more than 360,000 jobs in the next three years.” Currently, only one - in five business are digital, but they generate at least 80% of the overall rural small business revenue by selling their products and service online. To start this economic revival in rural America, we need to first increase funding for high-speed broadband in rural America. It’s shocking that rural Americans are over 10 times more likely than urban residents to lack quality broadband access.

Included with this questionnaire are the position papers I drafted dealing with Rural America and Economic Development. Please feel free to review these papers to gain a better understanding of my position on these issues.

Climate

3. How do you view the existential threat posed by the climate crisis?
- A. Don’t worry. The market solves all problems.
  - B. Combating climate change will require significant personal lifestyle changes and great shared sacrifice.

C. Promptly taking substantive collective steps to meaningfully address climate change provides us the opportunity to modernize our economy while transforming our society toward greater economic and social justice.

Please choose the option that most closely expresses your views and provide us your thoughts on how you will address climate change if elected to U.S. Congress.

**ANSWER:**

I believe that Climate Change is real and a threat to our survival. I would support options B & C as listed in your questionnaire.

One of the defining issues in this race is how the four leading candidates in the race would deal with the climate crisis. Three of the leading contenders support the New Green Deal, I do not! This may be a deal-breaker for most progressive organizations on the surface, but I believe that facts matter. While it would be easy to join all of my friends in supporting the New Green Deal, I believe that it would be a disservice to my constituents in the 3rd Congressional district.

As a lifelong Democrat, I support many of the goals of the “New Green Deal.” Before I conducted a thorough analysis, my initial inclination was to endorse the proposal. After doing an in-depth study of the New Green Deal I came to a different conclusion. Quite frankly, it is difficult for me to understand how any public official or candidate for Congress from New Mexico could support the “New Green Deal” as it stands today. Consider the following:

The New Green Deal calls for the elimination of all fossil fuel energy production – which includes not only oil but also natural gas – one of the cheapest sources of American energy.

The “Green New Deal” targets agriculture which is responsible for 9% of the nation’s greenhouse gasses including the release of nitrous oxide from soil and methane from livestock.

The “New Green Deal” calls for the elimination of all coal-fired plants in the United States.

These three proposals would have a devastating effect on the state of New Mexico.

According to the New Mexico Tax Research Institute, the state collected more than \$4 billion in revenue from activities related to oil and natural gas production in FY18. Comparing oil and gas production in the eight neighboring states, New Mexico has the greatest share of total oil and gas production contributing to government revenue. New Mexico is the third-largest producing state and the ninth-largest natural gas producer in the US.

Oil and gas has a significant impact on New Mexico's general fund receiving \$1.743 billion in FY17. Over \$934 million of the new oil and gas revenue went to education.

Agriculture is one of the state's principal industries with cash receipts approaching \$3 billion annually and directly supports over 23,000 jobs in the state. There are over 1.5 million cattle on NM lands and the state ranks seventh highest in milk and eighth highest in cheese production in the country. New Mexico's individual dairy-herds are the largest in the country.

Over 50% of electricity production in New Mexico is from coal-fired plants.

The overall price tag of the New Green Deal is estimated to cost \$93 trillion. An average American household would pay \$71, 910 in year one.

New Mexico is one of the poorest states in the country. It's economy is based on mineral extraction, agriculture, and tourism. The New Green Deal targets two pillars of the foundation of our economy. It would devastate our education system and our state operating budget. Thousands of New Mexico workers would become unemployed and small businesses throughout the state would go out of business. To endorse the New Green Deal without understanding the details is irresponsible and could be catastrophic to our state.

I believe that climate change is a credible threat to our future. Last year our legislature addressed this issue by passing the New Mexico

Transaction Act of 2019. Dubbed the “Mini New Green Deal,” the Act outlines a plan to change our electrical grid from coal to carbon-free renewable energy by 2045. I supported this legislation because it has a realistic time table and provides funding for economic diversification and retraining for coal miners and workers involved in these industries. Governor Grisham and legislative leaders worked with the affected communities and industries to enact this legislation. When elected to Congress, I hope to do the same at the federal level.

There are many things that we can do outside of the “New Green Deal!” I believe in investing in the development and deployment of technologies like solar, wind, nuclear and renewable energy. Since climate change is a global problem, I believe that the United States should rejoin the Paris Climate Change Agreement and build consensus throughout the world. Instead of cutting down 33 million acres of forest every year, we need to encourage reforestation and better forest practices. I also believe that New Mexico has the opportunity to build a geothermal energy program. At the same time, I oppose fracking and believe that we need to move away from fossil fuels in order to protect our future. Moreover, I believe that we must support our tribal brothers and sisters who are fighting with the fossil fuel industry to protect their lands and heritage.

I believe that the “ten-year mobilization plan” of the New Green Deal is unrealistic and will devastate the education system and economy of New Mexico. I join with the National AFL-CIO in opposing the New Green Deal because of its effect on our economy and on union workers. **Before I support any proposal, I have to be assured that the best interests of New Mexico are protected.** It is clear to me that of all the 50 states in the union, New Mexico would be most severely affected by the New Green Deal. Without more details and assurances of mitigation costs, I cannot support the “New Green Deal” at this time.

4. The Four Corners region and the southeastern part of the state rely heavily on fossil fuel extraction and processing to employ thousands of New Mexicans. What concrete steps would you take in Congress to address the climate emergency while considering the positive financial

benefits of the New Mexico oil and gas industry, to both our communities and our state budget?

**ANSWER:**

Please refer to my answer above. Specifically, I supported the New Mexico Transaction Act of 2019. Dubbed the “Mini New Green Deal”, the Act outlines a plan to change our electrical grid from coal to carbon-free renewable energy by 2045. I supported this legislation because it has a realistic time table and provides funding for economic diversification and retraining for coal miners and workers involved in these industries. Governor Grisham and legislative leaders worked with the affected communities and industries to enact this legislation. When elected to Congress, I hope to do the same on the federal level.

Progressive Values

5. What have you done in the past that demonstrates your progressive values? Please elaborate on your past efforts on issues such as advancing human rights, addressing climate change, diminishing the disparity of wealth in this country, ending structural racism, or advocating for peace and diplomacy instead of militarism.

**ANSWER:**

I am proud to belong to a family that has been dedicated to improving the lives of working families in New Mexico. My father was an elected official who always worked for progressive issues. My mother is a small businesswoman who is a role model for female entrepreneurs. Over the last 50 years, there has not been a time when my family has not been at the forefront of pushing progressive issues and policies. When I first ran for First Judicial District Attorney of Santa Fe, I made the opioid crisis in our community the central focus of our campaign. I pledged to work tirelessly to treat non-violent drug offenders with a treatment-oriented approach to our deeply entrenched drug problems. One of the reasons that I am running for Congress is that I realize that the only way we will be able to solve the opioid crisis is by building a partnership with the federal government and local caregivers. I hope to become a fierce advocate in Washington DC for northern New Mexico.

## Health Care

6. We are the only developed country in the world that has not yet managed to institute universal health care. Health care should be a right for every American. As U.S. congressperson, how do you propose we provide quality health care for every American?

### **ANSWER:**

Over a century has passed since Teddy Roosevelt proposed one of the first health care plans for America. Over 98 years passed until President Obama - with the help of a Democratic Congress – passed the first national health care plan in 2010. The Affordable Care Act was enacted with the knowledge that the law was imperfect and needed to be improved. The hope was that Republicans would join in a bipartisan effort to improve the Affordable Care Act. Instead, Republicans have done everything they could to overturn the law and minimize its coverage.

There are many reasons why Healthcare is an issue that **MUST** be resolved now rather than later. First and foremost is simple economics. Our country is spending far more on our health care system than nearly any other country in the world. Today we are spending over 18% of our GDP, almost double what other countries spend. We have allowed our country to be put at an economic disadvantage because we have refused to deal with the health care issue.

The American Healthcare industry is now worth \$3,504 trillion and growing. It's embarrassing to find that the healthcare industry spends four times as much on lobbying as the number two Beltway spender, the much-feared military-industrial complex. They do so to protect their lucrative business model. At the same time, over 4 percent of Americans file for bankruptcy each year due to medical expenses. Regrettably, our healthcare system is not even close to the best in the world. Although Americans pay more money than the rest of the world for health care, mortality rates are higher than other developed countries. Statistics in Healthcare show that almost 4 out of 10 Americans are morbidly obese. Over 7 of 10 are overweight. The most compelling statistic is the fact that the number of uninsured children increased by more than 400,000

between 2016 and 2018, an unprecedented decline in health coverage for the youngest Americans.

## **HEALTH CARE IN NEW MEXICO:**

The implementation of the Affordable Care Act in 2014 expanded insurance coverage in New Mexico by expanding eligibility for New Mexico Medicaid programs. The percentage of New Mexico adults without medical coverage dropped by over 54% between 2011 and 2016. As of 2017, New Mexico was one of five states with a state-based health insurance exchange that used the federal web platform. Enrollment in plans offered on the exchange amounted to about 45,000 in 2017. In addition, the ACA made available to New Mexico \$37.5 million to provide coverage for uninsured residents with pre-existing medical conditions through a new transitional high-risk pool.

Unfortunately, much still has to be done to provide adequate health care in New Mexico. The New Mexico Department of Health issued a “State of Health in New Mexico report,” in 2018. The findings are discouraging:

Thirty – two of New Mexico's counties are designated “health professional shortage areas.”

Life expectancy in New Mexico has decreased over the last three years due to drug overdose, motor vehicle injuries, heart disease, and infant mortality.

Life expectancy for New Mexican's aged 65+ was 20.7 years in 2016, compared with 19.4 years in the US. Years of life expectancy from age 65 was lower in southwestern New Mexico and generally higher in northern counties.

Drug use rates among children are extremely high relative to the rest of the US.

Sexually transmitted diseases have increased dramatically in New Mexico. From 2015 – 2016, there was a 61% increase in the rate for syphilis and a 40% rise in the rates for gonorrhea.

Smoking-related illness in New Mexico costs the state \$844 million in direct health care and \$597 million in lost productivity every year.

New Mexico's rate of death due to alcohol-related chronic disease is more than twice the national rate. New Mexico has the dubious honor of having the highest alcohol-related deaths in the United States since 1997.

New Mexico had the 12<sup>th</sup> highest drug overdose death rate in the nation in 2016. Rio Arriba County had the highest drug rate in the state.

Of the 1.6 million adults aged 18 years and older in New Mexico, approximately 235,000 adults have diabetes.

New Mexico had the second-highest intentional injury rate in the US in 2016, 32.8 deaths per 100,000 population.

In 2016, New Mexico had the fourth-highest suicide rate among all U.S. states. Over the last decade, the suicide rate has increased by 25%.

American Indians in New Mexico experience the highest rate of pneumonia and influenza deaths, approximately double the average rates for New Mexico and the US.

## **HEALTHCARE FOR THE FUTURE:**

I believe that healthcare is a right and not a privilege. A tremendous amount of progress has been achieved over the last eight years since the passage of the Affordable Care Act. Much more has to be done. The Affordable Care Act is the first step in providing world-class health care to our citizens. When elected to Congress, I will fight for the following:

The Affordable Care Act is the first major step taken to provide universal healthcare for Americans. I will vote against any effort to repeal or minimize the Act.

My top legislative priority will be to lower the cost of prescription drugs by allowing Medicare and Medicaid to negotiate bulk-purchasing discounts of prescription drugs and competitive pricing.

I support allowing consumers to buy cheap drugs from foreign countries like Canada and Mexico.

I will fight all efforts to remove the pre-existing conditions ban from the Affordable Care Act.

I will fight to keep the ACA provision allowing children to stay on a parent's plan until the age of 26.

I will support increasing the funding for community health centers which currently serve more than half of the rural health centers in the country.

I support building new health clinics and deploying tele-health technology to serve rural America.

I support realistic healthcare reform! I do not believe that the **Medicare for All** proposal backed by many of my opponents is a realistic approach to expanding health care. The \$30 trillion price tag over a ten year period does not seem achievable at this time. According to the Urban Institute, the increase in federal spending for Medicare for All represents more than triple all spending on the military.

I support the **Medicare for all, Who Want It** proposal which allows individuals to purchase a public health insurance option like Medicare. I believe that the 149 million Americans who currently have private insurance plans should be allowed to keep them.

Finally, I support expanding the ACA by imposing higher capital gains taxes on the rich. I will oppose any plan that provides middle-class tax hikes.

In conclusion, I am reminded of the comment made by Walter Cronkite that “America's health system is neither healthy, caring or a system.” To bring true health care reform, I believe that we need to unify our divided country and present a bipartisan proposal to the American people. As your next Congressman, I pledge to work to bring meaningful health care reform as soon as possible.

## Immigration

7. Ever since Trump took office, Democrats have been playing whack-a-mole in Congress and in the courts, attempting to forestall the administration’s egregiously cruel immigration policies. Please step back from this reactionary stance and tell us what you would do in the U.S. Congress to achieve a just and equitable immigration policy.

### **ANSWER:**

The history of immigration in the United States is checkered with xenophobia and the fear of the unknown. Starting with the Know-Nothing Party opposing Catholics from entering the country, we have a long history of keeping ethnic groups from entering our country. From excluding Chinese workers in 1893 and all Asians in 1921 to the Operation Wetback for Mexicans in 1954, history has not treated us kindly as it relates to our immigration policies.

Many studies have been conducted over the years regarding the social, economic and political aspects of immigration. Recent studies suggest that immigration is beneficial to the worldwide economy. With few exceptions, the evidence suggests that on average, immigration has positive economic impacts on the native population. Research also finds that migration leads to greater trade in goods and services.

In terms of the United States, the Rand Corporation issued an economic analysis, which showed that immigrants contribute as much as \$10 billion to the economy. It also showed that there is no strong statistical support for the notion that immigration has an adverse effect on native-born workers. Research suggests that diversity and immigration have a net

positive effect on productivity and economic prosperity. Studies also show that the elimination of barriers to immigration would have profound effects on world GDP, with estimates of gains ranging between 67 – 147.3% in the scenarios where billions of people move from developing countries.

Studies in the US show similar results. A New York Times from 2017 stated, An internal study by the Department of Health and Human Services under the Trump Administration, which was suppressed and not shown to the public, found that refugees to the United States brought in \$63 billion more in government revenues than cost the government. A 2017 study of Mexican immigrant households in the United States found that by virtue of moving to the United States, the households increase their incomes more than fivefold immediately.

The strongest argument for proponents of immigration are studies that show that immigrants are responsible for greater invention and innovation in our country. According to one report, “immigrants have started more than half of America's startup companies valued at \$1 billion or more and are key members of management an/or product development teams in over 70% of these companies.” More profound is the fact that **33 of 85** American winners for the Nobel Foundation awards have been immigrants, since 2000. Lastly, immigrant workers hold a disproportionate share of jobs in science, technology, engineering and math.

President Trump has tried to justify his immigration policies based on the perceived threats of terrorism and crime. In terms of terrorism, there is little statistical evidence that supports a link between immigration and terrorism. The vast majority of terrorism based crimes in the United States have been caused by native white nationalists. Ironically, when President Trump tried to block nationals from seven Muslim - majority countries from entering the United States he neglected to include the one country, which the vast majority of 9/11 terrorists came from (Saudi Arabia). In terms of crime, the vast majority of studies show that immigrants have lower crime rates than native-born citizens in the United States. Of the 50,000 people held in detention by Immigration and Customs enforcement in 2019, 64% had no criminal record. Of those who had criminal records, many of the convictions were for crimes that were nonviolent, such as traffic citations and immigration violations.

In conclusion, the overwhelming majority of research proves that immigration has a positive effect on our country. Problems do exist, but the overall benefit to our country is clear.

## **IMMIGRATION IN NEW MEXICO:**

A number of studies have been conducted to judge the impact of immigration in New Mexico. These studies from the American Immigration Council, 40 Fair and Ballotpedia paint a comprehensive picture of immigrants in our state:

Nearly one in 10 New Mexican residents is an immigrant, while 1 in 9 residents is a native-born US citizen with at least one immigrant parent.

More than a third of all immigrants in New Mexico are naturalized U.S. citizens.

Almost one in six adult immigrants have a college degree or more in 2015, while nearly half have less than a high-school diploma. More than 50,000 US citizens in New Mexico live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

As of 2016, approximately 6,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients live in New Mexico.

Immigrants in New Mexico contribute over a billion dollars in yearly taxes.

Undocumented immigrants in New Mexico paid an estimated \$67.7 million in state and local taxes in 2014.

DACA recipients in New Mexico paid an estimated \$18.8 million in state and local taxes in 2016.

Immigrant entrepreneurs represent more than one in seven business owners in New Mexico.

15,224 immigrant business owners accounted for 15 percent of all self-employed New Mexico residents in 2015 and generated \$375.1 million in business income.

As consumers, immigrants add billions of dollars to New Mexico's economy.

Although the federal government has jurisdiction over immigration, New Mexico and other states have adopted policies of not cooperating with federal law enforcement. Over 300 jurisdictions have been identified as sanctuary cities. Within the 3rd Congressional district in New Mexico, the following jurisdictions were reported as sanctuary cities:

- Rio Arriba County
- Taos County
- San Miguel County
- Santa Fe County
- Bernalillo County

New Mexico has taken a proactive approach to immigration by:

- Allowing individuals residing in the state without legal permission to access in-state tuition rates and state financial aid.

- Allow lawfully residing children and pregnant women to enroll in Medicaid.

- Permits drivers licenses to be issued to individuals residing in the country without legal permission.

- Not requiring employers to use the E-Verify system when hiring employees.

## **MY PRIORITIES:**

Looking back over the last 200 years, it is clear that immigration is an issue that needs to be solved - once and forever. To accomplish this task, we need to have a bipartisan approach that considers the benefits and problems associated with comprehensive immigration reform. More than anything else, we need to understand that the world is shrinking and that

we live in a global community. It is also clear that our country will continue to become more multicultural over the next 50 years.

When elected to Congress, I will work diligently for the following policy initiatives:

I support a moratorium on deportations until an audit on immigration policies can be reviewed and be the basis for Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

I support sanctuary cities and funding of facilities to hold families in a humane and caring environment.

I support the repeal of section 1325 of the US Immigration law which criminalizes illegal entry into the United States. I believe that it should be a civil and not a criminal offense.

I support creating a pathway to citizenship for the roughly 11 million undocumented immigrants who are living in fear of deportation.

I believe that DREAMERS and people with Temporary Protected Status must have a pathway to citizenship. Specifically, I support the Dream and Promise Act that was introduced in Congress last year.

In terms of ICE, we need to streamline the bureaucracy and make it more responsive to the backlog for family-based visas that have kept families apart.

I support granting drivers licenses to illegal immigrants nationwide.

I support providing health care to everyone, regardless of whether they are documented or undocumented.

I support reversing the travel ban that President Trump imposed and continues to block individuals residing in 13 countries from entering. The longer the ban is in place the longer the list of

countries will grow, and this is exactly what this president has in mind.

I support increasing the cap on refugee admissions from President Trump's low of 18,000 to the Obama era refugee cap of 110,000.

In order to protect workers from labor law violations, I support offering immigrant workers whistleblower protection if they speak up about workplace abuses.

In terms of my philosophy, I believe in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that “we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” There are many challenges facing our country, but I believe that our country will rise up to the challenge and show that we are still the melting pot of the world and the land of opportunity.

### Fair Elections

8. The growing power of money and corporations in our elections, combined with the adverse effects of voter suppression, gerrymandering, and geographically disproportionate representation poses a substantive threat to our democracy. As U.S. congressperson, what would you do to ensure free and fair elections?

### **ANSWER:**

There is little question that we need to pass a constitutional amendment to repeal Citizens United. With the US Supreme Court decision in Citizens United, outside groups have more than tripled their spending on political campaigns. During the 2016 election alone, outside organizations spent a whopping \$1.4 billion on elections, and nearly \$181 million of those funds remain untraceable because they were spent by dark money organizations. Many of the companies engaged in this kind of outside political activity are significantly influenced by foreign sources.

### Foreign Policy

9. On December 10, 2019, more than 180 House Democrats joined a nearly united Republican caucus to pass a sweeping \$738 billion military spending bill that gave President Trump his long-sought "Space Force," free rein to wage endless wars, and a green light to continue fueling the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen. Just 48 members of the House, including 41 Democrats, voted against the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, which increases the Pentagon budget by \$22 billion. How would you have voted on this bill, and how will you vote on the next Defense Authorization Act if it authorizes \$700 billion or more for the defense budget? Does it make a difference to you if the bill would come from a Democratic president?

**ANSWER:**

I believe that we must maintain a strong military. At the same time, I think it is ridiculous that we are spending more money on our military than the next ten countries combined. As the next Representative from the 3rd Congressional district, I will closely look at every appropriation bill and question their viability towards our national defense. Before ever appropriating more funding to DOD, I will exhaust all options of transferring funds within the department for new projects before entertaining the idea of appropriating more of our taxpayers' dollars. Without having more information, I cannot honestly promise to vote for or against the next Defense Appropriation bill. On a philosophical basis, my first priority will be to ensure that our veterans get the help they need when they return home from service. I also believe that we need to balance all of our resources between domestic and military spending.

10. The Washington Post recently released the Afghan Papers, which reveal that senior U.S. officials failed to tell the truth about the war in Afghanistan throughout the 18-year campaign, making rosy pronouncements they knew to be false and hiding unmistakable evidence the war had become unwinnable. Do you have a plan to end the longest war in United States history, withdraw our troops, and bring our service members home

**ANSWER:**

It should be clear to everyone that the Afghanistan war is un-winnable and to continue fighting this endless war is not in our national interest. I agree with Mayor Buttigieg that one of the solutions to getting caught up in this type of war is to implement a three-year sunset for authorization of military force. I specifically agree with his statement that, "Because if our troops can summon the courage to go overseas, the least our members of Congress should be able to do is summon the courage to take a vote on whether they ought to be there." As the next Representative of the 3rd Congressional district, I will support ending our military involvement in Afghanistan and instead promote economic assistance.

### Trade Policy

11. Free trade plays an integral part of American foreign and economic policy. As a border state, New Mexico directly benefits from foreign trade. At the same time, many manufacturing workers, farmers, and small-business owners, have been negatively affected by U.S. trade policy. As a U.S. congressperson, how would you propose altering our trade policy to protect those adversely affected?

### **ANSWER:**

I support free trade policies and believe that it directly benefits workers in New Mexico and the United States. Over the last three years, the Trump administration has praised itself for bringing about an economic renaissance to the United States. While job growth has increased since 2010 and the economy has grown, the fact is that many Americans have not benefited from this "economic renaissance." This is especially true for many workers in the 3rd Congressional district and throughout New Mexico.

Recent studies have shown that the economic recovery is not what the President is making it out to be. The US Department of Labor recently disclosed that job creation in President Obama's final 29 months in office generated 800,000 more jobs than President Trump in his first 29 months of office. The New York Times recently disclosed that the economy got less of a jolt from President Trump's tax cuts than it initially appeared. Meanwhile, these tax cuts have ballooned the US spending deficit which will be a massive trillion dollars next year. The trade war that President

Trump has waged against China has hurt the US economy and may bring us into a recession in 2020. According to the American Farm Bureau, farm bankruptcy filings in the year 2019 were up 13 percent from 2018 and loan delinquency rates are on the rise. In addition, American agricultural exports to China were \$24 billion in 2014 and fell to \$9.1 billion last year. Exports of farm products to China fell by \$1.3 billion in the first half of this year.

Overall, New Mexico has followed the rest of the United States in its economic performance. Despite efforts to diversify, much of the state's economy is still dependent on the mining industry. According to the New Mexico Tax Research Institute, the state collected more than \$4 billion in revenue from activities related to oil and natural gas production in FY18. Agriculture is one of the state's principal industries with cash receipts approaching \$3 billion annually. There are over 1.5 million cattle on New Mexico farms and the individual dairy herds are estimated to be the largest in the country. The New Mexico Bureau of Economic Research projects "most new jobs in relatively low-wage sectors and that income growth will be a drag on the state's economic growth through 2020." In addition, the climate change debate has raised the question of our country moving away from fossil fuels to renewable energy resources. Given the importance of the oil and gas industry to the New Mexico economy, the future of our economic well being is in jeopardy.

To flourish, I believe that New Mexico has to elect public officials who will fight for a strong economy. With globalization, automation and the challenges of climate change, our state must diversify and accept the challenges of the future. As a member of Congress, bringing jobs and economic opportunity to our communities will be my top priority. To succeed, we must understand the challenges facing our country and bravely accept the challenges of a global economy.