



ADELITA GRIJALVA

Pima County Board Supervisor
First elected 2020



WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN ELECTED LEADER?

I have served on the Tucson Unified School District Governing Board for 20 years, and my term will be ending December of 2022. While I have been so privileged to serve our community through the school districts, I was also honored to be elected to the Pima County Board of Supervisors, beginning my term in January of 2021. It has been an incredible learning experience for me to be able to understand how these two elected offices have complemented each other. For example, one of the most important issues that I chose to focus on while serving on the TUSD Governing Board was the necessity to provide quality educational opportunities to every student in our District – even our very youngest. During my time on the board, we have been able to expand the number of preschools in the Tucson Unified School District by 5,000%. Later, as a Pima County supervisor, I was able to continue this goal of improving access to early childhood education by voting to dedicate \$10 million to preschool expansion within Pima County. This effort has taken 20 years to come full circle, but I am so proud of these accomplishments.

Another particular accomplishment that I have been able to witness is being able to watch how the diversity on the TUSD Board has changed during my 20 years of service. It has evolved from myself being the only person of color on the board to every single person on our current, five person board.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH WITH THE REMAINDER OF YOUR TERM?

I am looking forward to being able to help our district and county emerge from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic into what will be our new normal. So much of the last two years has been focused on what we need to be doing to try to keep our community safe. My office has been working hard to ensure that people can turn to us as a resource – from communicating accurate information about vaccines and how to access them; providing information on rental assistance, food security and medical care; distributing masks and collaborating on community vaccine sites; and attending discussions with the Pima County Health Department to ensure that we’re publicizing the most up-to-date and accurate information to our community. Recovering from this pandemic is going to be an “all hands on deck” effort, and, much as we would all like for it to be over, it will take some time before our district, our county and the world has recovered from the events of the past two years.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING YOUR COMMUNITY?

The still-elevated challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recovery efforts ongoing for all of us continues to be one of the major preoccupations for our office and our community. Pima County District 5 is home to over 204,000 residents, many of whom are people of color or low-income families and individuals. The devastations that they in particular have faced during the past two years have been thrown into sharp relief – financial insecurity; the constant threat of evictions and a precarious housing market with almost no available affordable housing; and inadequate and inequitable access to medical care, food and resources have become even more deeply ingrained into our community than before the pandemic.

While being able to help residents of District 5 navigate through these difficult times is still the biggest priority for me, I am also very committed to protecting, and even expanding, open space, the conservation of natural resources, and the enhancement of both our community and the wonderful Sonoran Desert in which we live. Urban sprawl, developers destroying landscapes and habitats, and the continued introduction of harmful chemicals and toxins to the environment all have devastating and long-lasting consequences for all of us.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that the critical and systemic underfunding of our public schools in Arizona is causing catastrophic consequences and will harm Arizonans for generations. We once valued public education, and its support was a non-partisan issue. Unfortunately, we have veered far from that ideology, and our community will have to deal with the consequences.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE CONSIDERING RUNNING FOR OFFICE FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Think about why you are running for the office, make sure that you understand the issues facing the office you are running for, and focus on how you can contribute to improving the quality of life of the community and your constituents. In my experience, the best colleagues on the board are those who have been able to clearly articulate the issues, have been willing to put in the work, continue to keep the lines of communication open, and want to be part of the solution. It is also important to make sure that you have a strong support system – you will need family and friends to help with getting on the ballot and then, once elected, that same support system will be invaluable sources on whom you can rely to be willing to provide constructive criticism and feedback. There will be hard work involved, but the reward will exceed all expectations.



IS THERE A CONSERVATION-RELATED POLICY, RULE OR IDEA YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL, STATE OR NATIONAL LEVEL?

I would love to see the expansion of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, the plan created by Pima County focusing on the protection and enhancement of our unique desert landscape in concert with the realities of the growth of our community. The SCDP focuses on five different elements, chosen to enhance the desert ecosystem: the protection of critical habitats and biological corridors for endangered species, riparian areas, natural landscapes like mountain parks, the preservation of historical and cultural sites, and ranch conservation. With these priorities in mind, the SCDP seeks to balance the conservation and protection of our incredible cultural and natural resource heritage with the county's ongoing efforts to maintain an economically vigorous and fiscally responsible community.

