



DERRICK LENTE

District 65, State House of Representatives, NM
First Elected 2016



WHAT IS YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT OR IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN ELECTED LEADER?

While there have been some “popular” pieces of legislation that I passed during my tenure (HB 100, Rename Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day), my passion is focused on education. I was pleased my first piece of legislation I passed was HB 250 in the 2019 legislative session. This important piece of legislation provides accountability as it relates to the education of Native American students in our public schools. In addition to this piece of legislation, my participation in the Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico case continues to highlight the challenges and dire needs our students have related to their education and progress to become college- and career-ready.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

Because most of my legislation has involved Native American issues, working in collaboration and obtaining full endorsement of said legislation from all 23 Pueblos, Nations and Tribes is, at times, a challenge. Fortunately, we have been able to strike a balance that has allowed us to proceed with such strong appreciation and endorsements.

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

Be yourself. Be confident in what you will be able to bring to the office through your educational achievements, professional experiences and accomplishments, and personal values. Don't change your values for anyone or any special interest groups. Always remember you are running to be a representative of the people in your communities.

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

I have worked actively against fracking within the Rio Grande valley of central New Mexico, specifically Sandoval County. I would like to work to develop a fracking policy to ensure these actions do not continue to reappear based on the political makeup of our county and state representatives. Representing a majority/minority district, education to the general public on asserting their needs or positions and to address systemic racism and racial inequity is a daily task.

HOW IS LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN YOUR COMMUNITY WORKING TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF SYSTEMIC RACISM AND RACIAL INEQUITY?

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AS A LOCAL LEADER, ARE THERE ANY LESSONS LEARNED/ADVICE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH FELLOW LOCAL OFFICIALS ON RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES?

Make sure your mobile phone is charged! Having the ability to be responsive during these times has been extremely important. During emergencies when minutes seem like hours and assistance is needed, being able to help remotely has been very helpful and in many cases has eased the stresses the pandemic has created for many of my constituents.

