

Governor Susana Martinez

31st Governor of New Mexico

Holding the Line: Restoring Fiscal Sanity in Government. A budget hawk with no patience for government excess, Susana Martinez turned a record-setting budget deficit into a record-setting surplus as New Mexico's governor. At the same time, she cut taxes and fees more than 60 times, vetoed a billion dollars in tax increases, cut wasteful spending, and restrained government growth. Susana shares the budget-making philosophy that helped her energy rich state weather a crash in energy prices, contributed to a more welcoming business environment, and set New Mexico on a course toward greater economic diversification. The only A+ rated governor on the Cato Institute's 2018 Fiscal Report Card, Susana explains how strong fiscal leadership is necessary to drive innovation, invest in education, limit corruption, and refocus priorities.

At the Border: Building Bridges, Building Walls. As a 25-year criminal prosecutor along New Mexico's southern border and a Hispanic governor who collaborated with the leaders of Mexican states to plan and build a cross-border binational community, Susana Martinez is uniquely suited to speak to the American possibilities in our relationship with Mexico. She brings a sense of reason, nuance, and context when discussing the ever-polarizing subject of immigration, arguing with great conviction that properly securing the border does not conflict with, but in fact, helps facilitate an increasingly vital economic partnership with countries south of the border and a fair immigration system for all. Whether it's working with Chihuahua's governor to find and extradite two accused child killers from New Mexico who were hiding in Mexico, fighting a years-long battle to end the practice of issuing a standard New Mexico driver's license to those in the country illegally, or driving New Mexico's export growth through the southern border to record highs, Susana Martinez has a grounded and important perspective to share about what the future holds on one of the most important policy frontiers of our time.

Crime Fighter. As a tough prosecutor for over 25 years who specialized in prosecuting child physical and sexual abuse, child and adult homicide, and gang and corruption cases, Governor Martinez made fighting crime a top priority. From cracking down on DWI's to strong reforms targeting child abuse and increasing pay for law enforcement officers and corrections officers. Governor Martinez passed a wide array of crime-fighting measures. These initiatives include prosecuting Katie Sepich's killer and fighting as District Attorney for the original Katie's Law. As Governor, Martinez expanded Katie's Law to require DNA samples from those arrested for all felonies, to be compared to DNA detected in unsolved cases. She signed Racheal's Law, legislation that protects victims of sexual assault from their abusers by allowing courts to grant permanent restraining orders against convicted sexual predators. She also fought for and secured \$1.2 million in the FY17 budget to begin clearing the backlog of over 5,000 evidence kits from sexual assaults and cracked down on repeat offenders. Governor Martinez fought to close the revolving door for violent and repeat offenders and strengthen the criteria for those released after arrest to protect communities from repeat offenders and ensure the appearances of those accused and/or convicted.

Issues of the Day: Finding Solutions and Common Ground in a Diverse, Polarized Nation. Drawing on her experience as a two-term, Hispanic governor of a majority-minority state, Susana Martinez shares her unique perspective on America's future. A former Democrat who once famously remarked to her husband, "I'll be damned, we're Republicans!", Susana comfortably channels the aspirations and frustrations of the American people in calling for an elevated and results-oriented discourse on the topics that so easily divide our country today. Rejecting tribalism and political labels, Susana urges a renewed, bipartisan focus on the issues that have, for decades, been emblematic of American excellence and leadership in the world: a dynamic and innovative economy, a strong well-trained military, an unbending commitment to democratic values and human rights, and an opportunity for every child to receive a quality education and live the same American Dream that she has been blessed to experience.

It's a Different World Out There: Leadership in the States. States are often referred to as "laboratories of democracy." True enough, says former New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, but perhaps more specifically, states are increasingly becoming the central battlefields for our nation's most intractable and difficult policy fights, in part due to dysfunction in the nation's capital. If bipartisan problem-solving doesn't happen in our statehouses, if polarization permeates state legislatures, and if reform and innovation are stifled by powerful special interests, what does the future hold?

Almost every state must balance their budgets every year. State level policies also drive the delivery and oversight of public education, and key healthcare decisions, like Medicaid expansion, and compete with one another for jobs and business investment, and are quite literally on the frontline in responding to natural disasters

and crises of all kinds. A hard-charging education fighter for excellence from an energy-rich state, Susana discusses how to navigate these and other issues and describes the kind of indispensable executive leadership it takes to make progress in today's political climate.

“En America, Todo es Posible!”: A Defense of the American Dream. For Susana Martinez, the American Dream is the story of her life. A little girl who grew up along the southern border also worked as a security guard at the age of 18 for her parent's small business while carrying a Smith & Wesson 357 Magnum. Susana followed her dreams and went to law school, became a well-known prosecutor for 25 years and advocated for abused children and sexual abuse survivors, and was later elected New Mexico's first female governor and the first minority (Hispanic) female governor in our nation's history. She passionately defends the notion that the promise of America must always be the possibility of a better life and brighter tomorrow. She discusses threats to this promise that we must confront today. Due in part to her youthful sass, Susana was dubbed “la abogada” or “little lawyer” by her grandmother, foretelling her successful career in law enforcement as an elected district attorney. Her father served in the Marine Corps and was a Golden Gloves boxing champion, and her great grandfather served as a general under Pancho Villa and fired the first shots of the Mexican Revolution. Courage and determination is in her blood, and serving others has been her life's calling. Hear her inspiring story and moving perspective on how to ensure that every child has the opportunity to live their own American Dream.

Our children are not democrats or republicans: Governor Martinez's Commitment to Education. Governor Susana Martinez has dedicated her entire career to the success of our children. She knows that if children have the opportunity to learn, they will have better paying jobs, not rely on government programs, and not end up on the wrong side of the legal system. From bold education reforms to raising academic standards, she has been committed to closing the persistent achievement gaps among our students. Under her watch, New Mexico's graduation rates increased by 11 percentage points, to an all-time high of 74%, fewer graduating students needed to take remedial courses, and the four-year college graduation rate doubled. Governor Martinez invested in our teachers by raising the salaries of starting teachers, significantly increasing funding for Pre-K programs and other early childhood education initiatives, expanding literacy programs, providing funds for tutoring at-risk students, and launching new teacher and principal mentoring programs. The Governor emphasizes that our children are not Democrats or Republicans, they simply deserve a good education.

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