

2019 In Review: Senator Tom Udall Highlights Legislative Accomplishments for New Mexico and the Nation

“New Mexicans sent me to Washington to get things done – and I’m proud to have worked to advance the priorities of families in our state and across the nation. I have focused my legislative priorities on the issues that affect New Mexicans and the future of our country the most: our economy, our democracy, our planet, our leadership in the global community, our values, and our children’s health, safety and future. I am proud of what we have accomplished in 2019 and I look forward to getting to work for New Mexicans and the American people in the new year.”

– **U. S. Senator Tom Udall, D-N.M.**

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Strengthening Economic Opportunity in New Mexico

As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Udall has fought to secure critical investments for New Mexico's economy and grow federal economic development programs in New Mexico. This year Udall worked to include New Mexico in the following programs:

- Udall successfully fought the Trump administration's attempt to de-fund programs that help promote jobs and support working families in New Mexico. Udall authored bipartisan funding bills on the Senate Appropriations Committee that provide critical resources to New Mexico's communities, workforce, and economy. The appropriations process led to \$22.8 billion in federal investments in New Mexico in 2019, more than \$10,000 per person in the state. Funding includes:
 - [\\$5.49 million in grants from the Economic Development Administration \(EDA\) to communities across New Mexico last year](#) to jumpstart critical infrastructure projects and help rural communities diversify their economies.
 - The EDA [recently awarded nearly \\$1 million to the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments](#), a Udall-supported grant to help Cibola, McKinley, and San Juan Counties break ground on a new industrial park, and [another grant to launch the Big Idea Innovation Accelerator at San Juan College, which will offer resources, consulting, and mentorship to boost entrepreneurship](#).
 - After support from the New Mexico Congressional Delegation, [the federal Department of Transportation awarded a \\$12.5 million grant to improve safety on heavily-traveled roads in the Permian Basin in Southeast New Mexico](#).
- The delegation, led by Senator Udall, secured commitments from Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories to give a preference to local and state small businesses that contract for goods and services. This opportunity is unique to New Mexico and is not seen anywhere else in the nation. The purchasing preference ensures that federal facilities will continue to work with local entrepreneurs as they conduct cutting edge research.
- Udall secured investments to help bring to market technology developed at federal research facilities. Funding included \$10 million for [Air Force Research and Development Technology Transfer](#), and over [\\$2 million invested in NM small businesses to support scientific innovation at Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories](#). Technology transfer grants help New Mexico businesses work with the federal government to advance technology and bring innovation to market. This year, [Los Alamos National Lab created 24,000 jobs and supported an additional \\$3.1 billion and 12,000 full time positions in New Mexico's economy](#). In 2017, [the Air Force Research lab in Albuquerque reported](#) that it contributed to creating more than 4,100 jobs that year. Nearly 50 percent of the lab's contracts were awarded to New Mexico companies, supporting \$159 million in the local economy.
- Together with U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich, Udall [fought to extend services from the Minority Business Development Agency \(MBDA\) in New Mexico](#). The agency, which Udall helped fund at \$42 million this year, promotes economic growth by empowering minority entrepreneurs through business development programs. Udall and Heinrich secured language to require MBDA to create at least one business development center in states like New Mexico with a plurality or majority minority population. This year, the Agency announced two new MBDA Business Centers in [Albuquerque](#) and [Las Cruces](#).

Climate Action, Conservation, and Environmental Protection

Senator Udall has long fought for bold action to tackle climate change and to protect the planet. He has responded to the alarm sounded by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and to the global scientific consensus that the planet faces a mass extinction crisis. This year, Udall:

- [Secured Permanent reauthorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), a program that Stewart Udall, Senator Udall's father, helped establish as one of the most successful conservation programs in U.S. history, helping to protect community parks, national parks, and other public lands that New Mexicans enjoy and that drive the economy.
- As ranking member on Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, [Udall helped secure](#) the largest budget for the Environmental Protection Agency in a decade, the highest funding for LWCF in 15 years—\$495 million dollars—funding for public lands in New Mexico and protection for Chaco Canyon, and critical funding for environmental cleanup projects in New Mexico.
- Introduced [Renewable Electricity Standard Act of 2019](#), bold legislation that would set the United States on a path to achieve zero-carbon electricity by 2050.
- Introduced the [METHANE Act](#), which would require pipeline operators to use technology to detect and prevent all-too-common methane leaks that pervade the industry. Udall also [led a group of 52 lawmakers](#) in filing an amicus brief that challenges the Trump administration's rollback of a methane waste prevention rule.
- [Took a stand](#) to clean up groundwater and prevent toxic PFAS chemicals from endangering communities in New Mexico and across the country in legislation requiring the Department of Defense to fund PFAS decontamination efforts. Udall fought to include [relief for New Mexican farmers affected by PFAS](#) in the National Defense Authorization Act, which became law in December.
- Introduced the [Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act](#), bipartisan legislation aimed at reversing the tide of habitat loss and fragmentation. Udall introduced the legislation to tackle the mass extinction crisis that currently confronts our planet.
- Unveiled a [major national conservation goal, the 30 by 30 Resolution to Save Nature](#), which calls for conserving 30% of U.S. lands and ocean by 2030 to address the global destruction of nature with the urgency it requires and lays out principles and pathways to achieve that objective.
- Released the first draft legislation ever in Congress that outlines an ambitious strategy to tackle the global plastic waste crisis by reducing single use plastic and requiring producers to take responsibility for recycling and incorporate recycled content into future products.
- Led the New Mexico delegation to introduce [the Western Water Security Act of 2019](#), legislation to address the water shortage crisis in New Mexico. The forward-looking legislation will arm communities with the federal funding and research necessary to grapple with the potential of a long-term drying trend in the West and changes in water availability exacerbated by climate change.

Democracy Reform

Senator Udall believes that the United States' system of government has reached a crisis point – dominated by big money, attacks on voting rights, and corruption. He has consistently supported reform to bolster voting rights and campaign finance overhaul throughout his career. Udall has led on democracy reform issues for years, and this year, Udall led Senate Democrats in introducing one of the most ambitious democracy reform packages in decades and a bold constitutional amendment to end the stranglehold of big money in politics:

- The [For The People Act](#) would restore the promise of American democracy—a government of, for, and by the people. Udall introduced this sweeping package of anti-corruption reforms to make it easier for voters across the country to cast their ballots, end the dominance of big money in politics and slow the revolving door between government office and corporate interest. The House passed a companion bill, HR1, in January 2019 and Udall has championed the push to pass the legislation in the Senate.
- Udall sees evidence every day of how big money is drowning out the voices of the American people. That's why he led Senate Democrats to introduce the [Democracy for All Amendment](#) in July. The resolution puts forward an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to save our democracy from the disastrous Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United v. FEC*, that opened the floodgates to secret money in political campaigns across the country.

Foreign Policy: Preventing “Forever Wars”

Senator Udall has championed a diplomacy-first position during his service on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, pushing for Congress to re-assert its Constitutional powers over war, end endless wars, and prevent unauthorized wars. This year, Udall took bold steps to end the longest American war and took a stand against Trump administration actions that could have started a catastrophic war with Iran. Udall introduced the following legislation:

- The [AFGHAN Service Act](#), bipartisan legislation that would end America's longest war, responsibly withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, and repeal the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) currently interpreted to justify America's presence throughout the Middle East.
- Led [The Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act of 2019](#), which prevents the Trump administration or future administrations from unilaterally inserting the United States into a war with Iran without Congressional approval. As President Trump had threatened to “obliterate” the country, Udall's measure earned majority, bipartisan support in the Senate and the House.
- A [resolution](#) prioritizing the implementation of the UN treaty—negotiated with significant U.S. input—to promote the peaceful use of space. The resolution puts the United States on a path to continue global leadership in space use and space innovation.



Executive Oversight and Standing Up for Our Values

When New Mexicans elected Senator Udall to Congress, he and his colleagues swore an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Udall used the platform of his Senate office this year to stand up for New Mexico's values and border communities, speak out to defend the rights of unaccompanied minors in U.S. custody and led the bipartisan Senate effort to end President Trump's politically-motivated emergency declaration, which the president has used to steal hundreds of millions of dollars from New Mexico defense projects to fund his border wall.

- Udall stood up to President Trump's unconstitutional move to declare a national emergency to steal defense funding to finance the border wall. Udall introduced two bipartisan bills to terminate the president's false emergency declaration that both passed the Senate and the House. Udall highlighted the urgent projects that the president raided funding from, many of which were intended for military families and key infrastructure for military bases in New Mexico. Two separate federal courts have now [issued injunctions](#) on the emergency declaration, ruling that it violated Congress's constitutional powers to decide federal funding.
- Udall pushed for transparency to reunite children separated from their parents by the Trump administration's cruel family separation policy. The funding package includes report language that requires the Department of Health and Human Services to publicly report the status of children who have been separated from a parent or legal guardian.
- Udall, alongside the New Mexico delegation, helped secure [\\$30 million](#) to reimburse border communities and organizations in New Mexico and elsewhere that have stepped up to provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers.
- Udall and Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-Texas) introduced the [Homeland Security Improvement Act](#) to improve accountability at DHS and ensure better transparency and oversight. The bill passed the House in September.

Consumer Safety

Families and communities in New Mexico and across the country have suffered senseless tragedies at the hands of drunk drivers for far too long. Udall has fought to prevent drunk driving deaths throughout his career in public office. And Udall has worked to ensure safe airline travel for all New Mexicans in light of recent tragedies and high-profile aviation safety concerns.

- Udall teamed up with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and partners across the aisle to introduce the [Reduce Impaired Driving for Everyone Act of 2019 \(RIDE Act\)](#). The RIDE Act would increase funding for technology that would prevent impaired drivers from starting a car and require automakers to install it. Leading automaker Volvo is already developing similar technology for a scheduled rollout in early 2020.
- In Senate committee hearings, Udall has [pressed airline executives](#) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials to make serious reforms to ensure the safety of all passengers, following tragic airline incidents – including the engine failure of a Southwest Airlines flight that caused the death of Jennifer Riordan, a beloved member of the Albuquerque community.

Health and Education

Every child deserves to go to school in a safe and healthy environment. And every family has the right to quality, affordable health care. That's why Senator Udall fought to protect New Mexicans' health care, and has championed federal action to ban lunch shaming and prevent an epidemic of tobacco addiction in e-cigarette use.

- Many students rely on school lunches as their only nutritious meal of the day. But it is common practice for schools across the country to throw away a student's lunch or give them a cold cheese sandwich if their parent or guardian is behind on payments. In 2017, New Mexico passed the country's first law to ban lunch shaming. Udall [introduced bipartisan legislation](#) to prohibit the cruel and antiquated practice of lunch shaming while making it easier to enroll in free and reduced lunch programs. He worked to [integrate the legislation into the FY 2020 Agriculture Appropriations bill](#), requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to direct schools to identify approaches that avoid humiliating students for a debt they have no power to pay.
- Nicotine use among teenagers has reached the level of an epidemic—increasing by 1.5 million teenagers in just one year. Senator Udall introduced the [Smoke Free Schools Act of 2019](#) to provide a roadmap to address the crisis. His legislation would declare teen e-cigarette use a public health epidemic and updates existing law banning cigarette use in schools to include e-cigarettes. He has also pressed the Trump administration and e-cigarette companies to end the dangerous nicotine marketing campaigns to children and remove dangerous, unregulated products from the market.
- Udall [voted to reverse](#) the Trump administration's effort to roll back pre-existing condition protections for hundreds of thousands of New Mexicans. He also [highlighted the stories](#) of New Mexicans who would be hurt if the Republicans and Trump administration succeed in undoing the Affordable Care Act.
- Udall worked with Senate Democrats to reauthorize the FUTURE Act, legislation that gives permanent funding to Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). This funding is a lifeline to New Mexico's 27 federally-recognized MSIs, including 23 Hispanic-Serving Institutions and four Tribal Colleges and Universities. Over the past 10 years, New Mexico universities and colleges received more than \$100 million from these federal grants. In that time, New Mexico received the second highest amount of funding per person and was sixth in the nation in total funding.

Indian Country

Senator Udall, as vice chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, has fought to ensure that the federal government upholds its trust responsibility to Tribes in New Mexico and across the country. This year, Udall focused on protecting Chaco Canyon, addressing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) crisis, protecting Native languages and funding essential services like the Indian Health Service.

- Senator Udall has fought to protect Chaco Canyon throughout his career. This year, [Udall led the New Mexico delegation to secure strong protections for the fragile landscape](#) that is considered sacred to Tribes. The government's funding package this year includes key protections for the area surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The bill prevents the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from leasing oil, gas, and minerals on BLM land within a 10-mile radius of the park to safeguard sacred sites and sensitive cultural items. The prohibition applies while a cultural resources investigation is undertaken in the area, which is funded by \$1 million in the bill to allow Tribes to identify culturally and historically significant areas. The bill also includes strong protections for Indian Tribes and allottees to make sure they can continue to develop their land.
- Udall has helped lead efforts in Congress to combat the level of violence against Native women by introducing [public safety legislation](#) and learning from Tribes on how to implement and improve the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to better serve Indian Country's needs. [This year, Udall secured](#) \$9.9 million for IHS to undertake domestic violence prevention efforts; \$3 million for BIA's Office of Justice Services to investigate MMIW cold cases and conduct officer MMIW response training; and \$7 million to support Tribal courts' implementation of Violence Against Women Act special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction. [Udall is continuing to push the Republican Senate majority to reauthorize VAWA](#) and include stronger protections for Native women and all women.
- Udall led the effort to pass the [Esther Martinez Language Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act](#) to strengthen Tribally-developed Native American language revitalization programs. The bill is named after Esther Martinez, an Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo traditional storyteller and Tewa language advocate who passed away in 2006. The bill expands the grant program to include smaller programs and allows each grant program to offer longer periods. The legislation passed Congress in December.
- Udall concentrated on securing essential funding for the IHS to address the agency's staffing shortage. In addition to [increasing funding for the IHS by \\$243 million for a \\$6.047 billion budget for the next year](#), Udall helped ensure that \$84 million in new funds will cover staffing needs at recently constructed IHS facilities.

Veterans

All Americans owe veterans and military families a debt that can never be repaid. Senator Udall has focused on ensuring that veterans in New Mexico and across the country can get the services that they deserve and have more than earned. Over the past year, Udall and his staff have also dedicated much of their time to seeking out New Mexico veterans to record and preserve their narrative histories as part of the Veterans History Project in the Library of Congress. Udall has also focused on connecting veterans with housing resources and eliminating the bureaucratic obstacles that veterans face to receiving health care.

- New Mexico has a proud tradition of military service. That's why, when Udall and his staff learned that New Mexican voices were underrepresented within the Veterans History Project, particularly Hispanic and Tribal voices, [they decided to seek out those voices and record their stories](#). Udall and his staff connected with veterans from all 33 counties in New Mexico to help record and preserve their narratives as part of the Veterans History Project in the Library of Congress.
- Udall has long championed efforts in Congress to ensure that veterans exposed to toxic burn pits receive better access to the medical treatment they need. As early as 2002, U.S. military installations in Afghanistan and Iraq began to rely on open-air burn pits to dispose of waste materials. In 2013, Udall enacted legislation to establish a burn pit registry to help veterans, doctors, and the VA monitor veterans' health and ultimately improve care for veterans that may have been exposed to toxic chemicals while they were deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq. This year, Udall introduced bipartisan legislation in the Senate, [the Burn Pit Registry Enhancement Act](#), to further strengthen and enhance the burn pit registry.
- As a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for funding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Udall has helped secure strong funding for veterans and exercised active oversight to ensure that New Mexico veterans get the care they have earned and deserve. This year, Udall worked with his colleagues across the aisle to help secure \$93.1 billion, for the Veterans Health Administration and \$131 billion in advance funding for FY2021's benefits such as disability compensation, educational aid, and job training.
- Senator Udall has also fought to include [over \\$40 million in funding](#) for veteran housing in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's budget. He also introduced the [Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act of 2019](#) to amend current laws to connect urban Native veterans to access health care through Urban Indian Organizations. This legislation passed the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in December.