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Pre-House Career

Significant Findings

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Cultural Affairs

Cultural Affairs Secretary: Administrative Services Directors Generally Have Experience In Administration & Finance – Current Director Had 25 Years Of Experience. “Lujan was an elected member of the state Public Regulation Commission prior to his winning the 3rd District congressional seat two years ago. He had previously served as deputy state treasurer (2002-03) and director of Administrative Services for the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs (2003-04). Cultural Affairs Secretary Stuart Ashman said the administrative services director position is an exempt job, meaning it's not protected by civil service rules, the secretary can appoint someone to the position and there aren't statutory job qualifications. ‘Usually, it's someone who has experience in administration and finance. My current (administrative services director) has 25 years as administrative services director for the Department of Transportation,’ Ashman said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/20/10]

Luján Didn’t Receive College Degree Until After Election To PRC. “A 1990 Pojoaque Valley High School graduate, Luján worked in various casinos from 1993-99 then had stints as marketing director for New Mexico Legislative Reports (1999-2001) and human resources manager at the Downs at Albuquerque (2001-02). Luján didn't have a college degree until after he was elected to the PRC in 2004.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/20/10]

Cultural Affairs Secretary Called Luján “Invaluable” To Department, Put Department Back On Track. “Ashman, who was appointed after Luján had taken the job, said Luján was "invaluable" during his time with the Cultural Affairs Department. ‘He put this department back on track with the audits and staffing; and (in) keeping the budget on track,’ Ashman said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/20/10]

PRC

Las Cruces Sun-News: “The PRC Has Always Had Its Share Of Controversies And Scandals, But None Touched Lujan.” “A graduate of Highlands University after having earlier left UNM, the young Lujan was elevated to chairman soon after being elected to the PRC. The PRC has always had its share of controversies and scandals, but none touched Lujan. And so, when Tom Udall gave up his House seat in 2008 to run for the Senate seat being vacated by Pete Domenici, the timing was perfect for Lujan, who was just completing his first term on the PRC.” [Las Cruces Sun-News, 11/22/14]

Luján Declined To Call For Indicted PRC Commissioner To Resign. “Gov. Bill Richardson said Thursday he's not planning on meeting with embattled Public Regulation Commissioner Jerome Block Jr., who was indicted Wednesday on eight felony charges. . . . Lujan's son, U.S. Congressman Ben Ray Luján, had previously held the seat that Block Jr. captured by winning a sixway Democratic primary and defeating Green Party candidate Rick Lass in the November general election. Asked if Block should resign, Ben Ray Luján said in an interview Thursday ‘these are decisions he's gonna have to make.’ Ben Ray Luján said Block's legal troubles could impact his work at the PRC. ‘Anytime there's a distraction, it's challenging,’ he said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/10/09]

Primary Opponent Slammed Luján For Missing 13 Out Of 14 Meetings Of Committee Dedicated To Computer Technology In Medical Care. “Wiviott also has attacked Luján for missing 13 of 14 meetings of the appointed, unpaid 25-member state Telehealth and Health Information Technology Commission, which works on using computer technology in health care. Luján's camp said Monday that Luján's PRC obligations forced him to

miss many of the Telehealth Commission meetings. But Wiviott's campaign said that a crosscheck of minutes of PRC and Telehealth Commission meetings shows that Luján had only three PRC meetings on the same days the health group met." [Albuquerque Journal, 5/21/08]

Luján Had 97% Attendance Rate At PRC Meetings. "Luján counters by touting his 97 percent attendance at PRC meetings. He and Marks have a competition to see who can attend the most meetings. 'Jason has me beat by threethirds of a percent now,' Luján joked." [Albuquerque Journal, 6/1/08]

Reporter Filed Complaint With Attorney General Alleging PRC Denied Request To View Luján's Emails Because Older Emails Had Been Deleted. "State law contains no recourse for people who ask to inspect state officials' public e-mails and find they've been deleted, an assistant attorney general says. The opinion earlier this month responded to a Feb. 1 complaint by a reporter who said the state Public Regulation Commission denied him the chance to inspect Commissioner Ben Ray Lujan's e-mails because e-mails before last September had been destroyed. The opinion said the PRC did not deny the reporter's request to inspect Lujan's e-mails since it gave him all e-mails it had from Lujan. The Inspection of Public Records Act sets remedies for when a public body violates the law, but does not address the PRC's failure to keep public records in accordance with state regulations, Sally Malave wrote in the opinion to David Collins, a reporter for The Santa Fe New Mexican." [Associated Press, 5/29/08]

Health Insurance

State Of New Mexico Began Gathering Health Insurance Claim Denial Data After Inquiry From Luján. "The state began collecting appeals data after then-state Public Regulation Commission Chairman Ben Ray Luján of Santa Fe inquired about denial rates. Luján, now a congressman, told the Journal recently that he began to focus on denials after a chance meeting with a northern New Mexico couple he hadn't seen in years. The woman had learned she had a problem with infertility, which wasn't covered under her health insurance policy. 'They (her doctors) said, 'We've been treating you for the last couple of years for endometriosis, and infertility is one of the problems associated with endometriosis.' Therefore, he said, the insurance company wanted to bill her for the past treatment she received for endometriosis. They (the couple) told me they were starting to get letters from the collection agency and worried they would have to sell their house (to pay the bill),' Luján said. 'So we gave it to the Consumer Complaints Division (of the PRC), they looked at it, and, lo and behold, the insurance company was wrong, and so that decision was overturned.' That case led Luján to wonder 'how many other people out there have their claims denied and don't know they can come to the PRC for help ... because they're scared to rock the boat. They don't want them (insurance companies) canceling them.'" [Albuquerque Journal, 9/6/09]

State Lawmaker Called Luján "Instrumental" In Shepherding Legislation To Close Health Insurance Coverage Loopholes. "In June 2007, state Sen. Dede Feldman, D-Albuquerque, asked for a meeting with PRC members and staff with a general idea of how the division could do more to regulate the insurance industry. Feldman said in a recent interview that she was pleasantly surprised when it became clear at the meeting that Luján, Marks and Chavez had already done their homework about what could be done to close loopholes in health insurance coverage. The result was one of the only health care reform bills that made it through the 2008 legislative session. 'They were very instrumental in writing that bill,' said Feldman, calling the legislation the PRC's idea." [Albuquerque Journal, 6/1/08]

Ibarra Lawsuit

Former Transportation Compliance Officer Sued Luján, Two Other Commissioners, Alleging He Was Fired For Recommending Investigation Into Bribe Solicitation. "An aspiring limousine operator, seeking an operating license from the state Public Regulation Commission, said he was told it was impossible without paying \$5,000 to \$10,000 'to grease the wheels.' Charles Zurek III of Las Cruces said he never paid any money and ultimately was awarded certification by the state. He made his comments in sworn testimony last summer in a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by a former PRC supervisor. Albert Ibarra, a former transportation compliance bureau chief, claims he was fired after pushing his bosses for an investigation into the reported shakedown, according to a copyright story published Sunday in the Albuquerque Journal. He says in his lawsuit he was wrongfully fired in 2005 in part for

speaking out about illegal, improper or unethical conduct within the agency. . . . Ibarra named three commissioners as defendants: Jason Marks, E. Shirley Baca and chairman Ben Ray Lujan. He did not sue commissioners Lovejoy or David King.” [Associated Press, 12/4/06]

Headline: Albuquerque Journal: “Suit Probes Alleged PRC Shakedown: Witness: Money Could ‘Grease the Wheels.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 12/3/06]

PRC Officials: Ibarra Was Fired Because He Was A Poor Manager & Supervisor. “PRC officials said in depositions that the Zurek case had nothing to do with Ibarra's firing and that Ibarra was a poor manager who couldn't adequately supervise.” [Associated Press, 12/4/06]

Ibarra Claimed He Asked Luján For Help In Preventing Retaliation After Requesting Bribe Investigation & Luján Never Responded. “In reporting the bribery allegation, Ibarra stated he was concerned about retaliation against him. The lawsuit states Ibarra wrote to Lujan, chairman of the PRC, and asked for help preventing retaliation against him but Lujan never responded. An attempt to reach Lujan for comment Tuesday was unsuccessful.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 9/14/05]

Ibarra Claimed Luján & Other Commissioners Intended To Get Rid Of Him Due To His Association With Republican Commissioner. “Ibarra served as executive assistant to former Commissioner Herb Hughes, a Republican, before Ibarra moved to the Transportation Division in May 2004. Following the November 2004 election, Ibarra heard that incoming Democratic commissioners Lujan and Marks together with incumbent Baca, also a Democrat, intended to get rid of him because of his earlier association with Hughes.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 9/14/05]

PRC Settled Case For Undisclosed Amount. “The PRC settled the lawsuit in October. The amount Ibarra will receive is confidential by law for six months. His attorney, Edward Hollington of Albuquerque, said last week, ‘We are pleased with the outcome.’” [Associated Press, 12/4/06]

Serna

State Insurance Superintendent Resigned Following Internal PRC Review & AG Investigation Into Favoritism, Conflict Of Interest. “Larger problems soon arrived at the PRC. In 2006, state insurance superintendent Eric Serna faced accusations of favoritism and conflict of interest involving his leadership of a nonprofit foundation that collected donations from businesses Serna regulated or hired as superintendent. Serna eventually agreed to leave amid an internal PRC inquiry and state Attorney General's investigation.” [Albuquerque Journal, 6/1/08]

Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

Jury Awarded More Than \$840,000 In Damages To Former PRC Employee In Sexual Harassment Suit. “A Santa Fe jury deliberated for more than three hours Monday before determining that King had sexually harassed his former assistant, Wyla Green. Jurors also found that King, the PRC and former PRC chief of staff Patrick Baca retaliated against Green after she came forward. Green was awarded more than \$840,000 in damages.” [Associated Press, 12/1/07]

Op-Ed Slammed Luján For Response To Sexual Harassment Lawsuit Brought By Former PRC Employee Against Commissioner David King. “After much deliberation and soul searching I feel, as a woman, I need to speak out. What I am talking about is the PRC's response to Public Regulation Commissioner David King's verdict in the sexual harassment suit brought against him by former PRC employee Wyle Green. . . . I find Chairman Ben Ray Lujan's statements ludicrous. Although he and the other commissioners condemned King's conduct, they said it would be King's decision if he wanted to remain a commissioner. Lujan also stated they asked King if this sexual harassment suit would affect his ability to serve his constituents. Maybe I misunderstood. Is King the victim here? The accused harasser gets to decide if he should stay in his elected position? Is the fox watching the hen house? . . . I have always had the utmost respect for Chairman Lujan, but I do not understand the position the commission has

taken. Anyone harassed in the workplace, but especially women, need to educate themselves extensively as to the law and sometimes, the unexpected outcome.” [Stephanie L. DuBois, Alamogordo Daily News, 12/8/07]

Luján: Up To King To Decide Whether He Should Resign After Court Determined He Had Sexually Harassed Employee. “The state Public Regulation Commission on Friday asked Commissioner David King to consider how a recent judgment against him in a sexual harassment case affects his ability to serve his constituents. PRC Chairman Ben Ray Lujan said that while the commission condemns King's conduct, only King can decide whether he should remain a commissioner. ‘It would be up to him to make a decision,’ Lujan said. ‘The commission does not have the authority to remove anyone.’” [Associated Press, 12/1/07]

Luján Issued Statement On PRC Implementation Of Sexual Harassment Training, Code Of Conduct. “Lujan said the PRC issued a statement in response to the verdict because it wanted its employees and the citizens of New Mexico to know that the commission has taken steps to avoid harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment training is mandatory for PRC staff and commissioners must follow a code of conduct. ‘As chairman of the commission, I thought that it was important for employees to know that we want to create a safe work environment for them,’ Lujan said. ‘It's important especially for women in the workplace to know they will be treated fairly.’” [Associated Press, 12/1/07]

Title Insurance Rate Case Recusal

Luján Faced Criticism For Accepting Meeting With Title Company Co-Owner, Bowed Out Of Company's Appeal Process Due To Controversy. “On the stump, Luján has also touted his efforts towards title insurance reform. But Luján took flack for a September 2006 meeting he had with Dave Contarino, who co-owns a title company and has worked as Richardson's presidential campaign manager and chief of staff. As a result of the meeting, Luján last year bowed out of an appeal over lowering title insurance rates. Luján has denied that there was anything inappropriate about the meeting and has said that the title insurance industry was trying to get him to recuse himself from the appeal because he had spoken out about the need for reform.” [Albuquerque Journal, 6/1/08]

Company Co-Owner Contributed \$2300 To Luján Congressional Campaign. “Contarino, who is now consulting for a company seeking to renew a state contract worth more than \$300 million a year, on Wednesday gave \$2,300 to Luján's campaign.” [Albuquerque Journal, 6/1/08]

Headline: Associated Press: “PRC chairman to stay out of appeal in insurance case.” [Associated Press, 11/2/07]

Title Association Asked For Luján Recusal – Luján Suggested Association Sought His Removal Due To His Support For Title Insurance Reform. “The New Mexico Land Title Association, which represents insurance agents and underwriters, and the PRC staff had requested Lujan's recusal. Lujan has said he believes the title insurance industry wanted him removed because he has talked about the need for title insurance reform. ‘I look forward to going up against the title insurance lobby in the next legislative session,’ said Lujan, who has said he'll ask Richardson to put title insurance reform on the Legislature's agenda in January.’” [Associated Press, 11/2/07]

Bio/Misc.

Significant Findings

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CQ Profile Of Luján Observed He Answered Questions With Polished Replies That Sounded Like His Press Releases. “A 2009 profile in Congressional Quarterly, a Washington-based legislative and political news service, said of Luján, ‘He follows in the active environmentalist mold of his predecessor, Democrat Tom Udall, who moved to the Senate.’ Congressional Quarterly also noted that Luján ‘has shown some of the political skills of his father, a well-known veteran dealmaker in New Mexico and speaker of the state House.’ The profile also observed that Luján is known for answering questions with polished replies that sound like his news releases.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 10/17/10]

Agriculture & Land Issues

Significant Findings



Mineral Royalties

Luján Sponsored Legislation To Allow States To Collect Their Own Mineral Royalties. “U.S. Senators Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., Tom Udall, D-N.M., John Barrasso, R-Wyo., Representatives Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., Michelle Lujan Grisham, D-N.M., and Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., introduced legislation today that would allow states to collect their own mineral royalties, protecting money that is rightfully owed to the states. The bill would effectively eliminate a collection fee charged by the federal government, which amounts to around \$40 million per year. . . . ‘New Mexico’s federal lands are a significant resource that provides important royalties that should be used to strengthen New Mexico,’ Rep. Luján said. ‘This legislation will ensure that more of the money that is rightfully owed to states will be returned in order to support vital programs and investments that make a difference in our communities. Sending the money directly to the states and not to the federal government first will streamline the process, reduce administrative costs, and allow states to receive more of these critical funds.’” [Enzi press release, 2/13/15]

Budget Issues

Significant Findings

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Cromnibus

Luján Voted Against Cromnibus Deal, Cited Provisions Rolling Back Wall Street Reform, Undermining Campaign Finance Rules. “A massive spending bill that cleared the Senate late Saturday passed with reluctant support from New Mexico's two Democratic senators who objected to provisions that altered rules for campaign finance and Wall Street banks. . . . ‘It is deeply disappointing that Congressional Republicans have used this process to pass damaging provisions that roll back critical Wall Street reforms and further undermine campaign finance rules,’ Lujan said. ‘In addition, the measure shortchanges investments in key areas that are critical to our nation's economic competitiveness and New Mexico's future - cutting Pell Grants and providing inadequate investment to clean energy. It also plays games with funding the Department of Homeland Security, which provides critical resources to New Mexico.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 12/14/14]

Albuquerque Journal Editorial Slammed Luján For Opposition To Cromnibus Spending Bill. “And to Reps. Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan Grisham, New Mexicans get that it's larded up with stuff that shouldn't be there. For those like Lujan Grisham who constantly decry ‘gridlock’ in Washington, that's called ‘compromise.’ Super conservative Ted Cruz, R-Texas, didn't like it either. New Mexicans have seen the alternative they would face again if Luján and Lujan Grisham had prevailed. In fact they're still recovering from it. USA Today listed New Mexico as the seventh-most affected state by the 2013 shutdown - ranking ‘sixth in states with the most federal employees per capita and fourth in states with the most federal contractors.’” [Editorial, Albuquerque Journal, 12/18/14]

Albuquerque Journal Editorial Praised Lawmakers For Averting Shutdown. “At midnight Sept. 30, 2013, the first government shutdown in 17 years kicked in. And it kicked off 16 days of unpaid work for 1.3 million federal workers, furloughs for hundreds of thousands of others, locked doors and gates for government-run facilities, and \$2 billion in additional costs for U.S. taxpayers. So everyone - especially in a state like New Mexico that is financially dependent on the feds - should breathe a big sigh of relief that we didn't go there again in 2014. . . . By its sheer size there are undoubtedly pretty smelly things in the Cromnibus, and those can and should be revisited in future cycles. But none stink as badly as paying a government \$2 billion to do nothing while workers sit home without paychecks.” [Editorial, Albuquerque Journal, 12/18/14]

Debt Ceiling

NRCC Paid For Robocalls Attacking Luján For Voting For To Raise Debt Ceiling. “Residents of the 3rd Congressional District can expect automated calls starting today that bash Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., for his Wednesday vote to raise the country's debt ceiling. Luján, along with 96 other Democrats - including New Mexico's other Democratic House member, Rep. Martin Heinrich - voted to raise the federal debt limit by more than \$2 trillion to prevent the United States from defaulting on any loans. The robo calls, paid for by the National Republican Congressional Committee, criticize Luján for his vote to raise the debt ceiling without addressing spending reductions. ‘The American economy is still in trouble,’ the recording says. ‘We are drowning in government debt, owed to countries like China. The national debt is now \$14 trillion, and Congressman Ben Ray Luján just voted for \$2 trillion more debt, without any budget cuts.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 6/3/11]

Earmarks

Luján Requested \$67 Million In Earmarks For Local New Mexico Projects. “Freshman U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., is asking for nearly \$67 million in ‘earmarks’ for federal government spending. While that might seem like a huge figure -- especially in a political climate in which the congressional earmark has become something of a dirty word -- spokesmen for national taxpayer watchdog groups say \$67 million is actually pretty modest compared to what some members of Congress try to snare for constituents. . . . Luján's requests vary from police radios in Bloomfield (\$270,000) to a \$3.6 million overpass in Clovis, to rehabilitating 30 low-income houses in Pojoaque Pueblo (\$590,000), to a \$508,088 appropriation for an electronic records system for Presbyterian Health Services.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 4/12/09]

Taxpayers For Common Sense VP: Luján Earmarks Aren't “In The Realm Of The Ridiculous.” “‘It isn't in the realm of the ridiculous,’ Steve Ellis, vice president of the Washington D.C.-based Taxpayers for Common Sense, said when asked about the sums in Luján's earmarks. ‘Some Congressmen requested a billion.’” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 4/12/09]

Murray-Ryan Deal

Luján Voted For Murray-Ryan Compromise Budget. “Congressman Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico's Third District released the following statement today after voting for a compromise budget plan that reduces sequester cuts over the next two years. ‘While this budget plan is not perfect, and neither side got everything they would have liked, it represents a compromise that takes important steps to chip away at the devastating cuts of the sequester. It rejects the calls of the extreme Tea Party elements that have demanded even deeper cuts that would harm New Mexico. Already in our state we have seen arbitrary sequester cuts negatively impact our economy and hurt our families. During this past year Head Start centers have shut down, workers were furloughed, and cuts to the national labs rippled through the state's economy. By reducing part of the sequester cuts and providing certainty and stability over the next two years, this plan puts Congress on a path to fund the government without legislating from one crisis to the next.’” [Luján press release, 12/12/13]

Luján Criticized Murray-Ryan Budget Deal For Failing To Include Extension Of Unemployment Benefits. “Democratic Rep. Ben Ray Luján raised concerns that the deal doesn't include an extension of unemployment benefits. ‘Failure to act on this critical extension during this difficult economic time would leave 6,000 unemployed workers in New Mexico without benefits at the end of the year and an additional 9,700 people without benefits in the first six months of 2014,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 12/12/13]

Pay-As-You-Go

Luján Expressed Support For Pay-As-You-Go Spending Plans For Federal Programs. “Luján emphasized the value of federal programs in lending a hand in New Mexico, such as providing subsidies to farmers and ranchers in addition to ongoing federal support for the state's national labs and military bases. To better fund such programs, Luján said he would back pay-as-you-go federal spending plans requiring Congress to fully fund programs when implemented. ‘What I'm suggesting is you go find targeted cuts or revenues to be able to pay for those programs,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/24/14]

Luján Supported Reinstating PAYGO System. “Luján advocated a return to the PAYGO system used to balance the budgets under the Clinton administration. He noted that Congress adopted a pay-as-you-go initiative in 2010, but claimed that the House had eliminated that in 2011.” [Los Alamos Monitor, 10/15/14]

Sequestration

Albuquerque Journal: “Luján Was Short On Specific Programs He Would Be Willing To Cut.” “Pearce and Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., both opposed the initial legislation leading to the sequester, which was triggered by a crisis over the nation's debt ceiling. Lujan said he's been actively lobbying House leaders to stave off cuts to New Mexico's national laboratories, which he and other delegation member described as vital to national security and competitiveness. Luján was short on specific programs he would be willing to cut, aside from echoing Udall and Lujan Grisham's concerns about Medicare. However, he cited a Defense Department NASCAR sponsorship that

costs as much as \$80 million annually and has come under fire from other Democrats as a symbol of budget excesses. 'I'm a fan of NASCAR but those kind of programs ... add up quickly,' Luján said." [Albuquerque Journal, 1/14/13]

Shutdown

Luján Backed Deal To End Shutdown, Criticized Short-Term Debt Limit Fix. "U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-Santa Fe, said the deal was imperfect, but essential. 'While I would have preferred legislation that extends the debt limit for a longer period and that funds the government at a higher level, this represents a compromise that will finally end the government shutdown that has hurt families in New Mexico,' Lujan said. He said the compromise would 'protect the full faith and credit of our nation by ensuring we do not default for the first time in history.' Like Heinrich, Lujan said the shutdown was unnecessary and needlessly hurt people. He said the compromise 'puts an end to the political games that have gone on too long. It is deeply disappointing that, once again, manufactured crises have taken a toll on our economy and on the day-to-day lives of people in New Mexico who have had to go without a paycheck or the benefits they count on.'" [Alamogordo Daily News, 10/16/13]

Luján Voted Against Piecemeal Bill To Fund New Mexico's National Laboratories, Including Weapons Programs At NNSA. "The U.S. House voted 248-176 Friday to approve funding for weapons programs at the National Nuclear Security Administration and New Mexico's national laboratories through mid-December, but the bill's fate in the Democratic-controlled Senate is uncertain at best. Rep. Steve Pearce, R-N.M., voted for the spending bill. Reps. Ben Ray Lujan and Michelle Lujan Grisham voted against it. . . . In a floor speech Friday, Lujan said the NNSA budget is critical to New Mexico, but he said the bill approved Friday would actually cut lab budgets because it retains sequester-level funding. He called the bill approved Friday a 'shame and a sham.'" [Albuquerque Journal, 10/11/13]

Luján Voted Against Piecemeal Bill To Fund Veterans Programs, National Parks. "Republican Rep. Steve Pearce was the only state U.S. House representative to vote three times Monday in favor of continuing federal support to veterans, keeping national park services, the Smithsonian, National Gallery of Art and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum operating and to make other appropriations for 2014. Reps. Ben Ray Lujan and Michelle Lujan-Grisham, both Democrats, voted against appropriating funds for veterans' benefits and the parks service, Smithsonian and Holocaust Memorial. Both resolutions failed." [Roswell Daily Record, 10/1/13]

Luján Opposed "Political Games" In Republican Piecemeal Bill To Fund Head Start, Impact Aid. "U.S. Reps. Ann Kirkpatrick, D-Ariz., and Ben Ray Lujan, D-NM, offered the following statements on House Republicans' piecemeal bills for Head Start and Impact Aid. . . . 'It's time for House Republicans to stop playing political games and allow a vote on a clean funding bill that will reopen the government. Their cynical piecemeal approach picks winners and losers while failing to fund all of the areas that are critical to families in Indian Country. Voting on short-term funding for Impact Aid and Head Start ignore the fact that sequester cuts to vital education programs have seriously harmed Native American students. Rather than take steps to end the shutdown and find a solution that ends the sequester, House Republicans continue to bend to the extreme elements in their party, leaving tribal communities to pay the price.'" [Kirkpatrick press release, 10/8/13]

Luján Kept Staff Working & Offices Open During Shutdown. "New Mexico's congressional delegation braced for a government shutdown in widely divergent ways. All members will remain on the job, but their staffs face different fates. Republican Rep. Steve Pearce plans to shut all of his offices and furlough all his staff during the shutdown while Democratic Rep. Ben Ray Luján plans to keep all staff working and all offices open." [Albuquerque Journal, 10/1/13]

TARP

Luján Would Have Voted Against Bailout. "All three candidates said they would have voted against the economic bailout plan. Lujan called it a 'blank check without any accountability' and said it didn't go far enough in helping keep people in their homes." [Albuquerque Journal, 10/20/08]

Luján Voted To Block Release Of \$350 Billion In Additional TARP Funding. “Today, Rep. Ben Ray Lujan voted to not release \$350 billion in additional TARP funds. Rep. Lujan issued the following statement following the vote. ‘The people of New Mexico want and deserve oversight of their tax dollars,’ said Lujan. ‘The release of the second part of the TARP funds without any added oversight is troubling. While this vote will not prevent the release of funds because of Senate action and while I have confidence that the Obama Administration will be wiser stewards of the public trust than the Bush Administration-I still want reassurances added to the release of funds either through legislative or executive action.’” [Luján press release, 1/22/09]

Wall Street Reform

Luján Sponsored Legislation To Tax AIG Bonuses At 90%. “Count New Mexico's congressional delegation among the chorus of public officials voicing outrage this week about the bonuses being paid to AIG executives. . . . Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., went even further. He cosponsored a bill last week that would recoup bonuses for AIG executives by taxing them at a rate of 90 percent. ‘Companies that requested federal dollars to keep their businesses solvent should not funnel this money toward bonuses for their colleagues,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 3/21/09]

Campaign Finance and Election Law Issues

Significant Findings



Citizens United

Luján Sponsored Legislation To Overturn Citizens United And DISCLOSE Act. “Congressman Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico’s Third District announced today that he is supporting a pair of measures aimed at limiting money in politics by overturning the Citizens United Supreme Court decision and increasing transparency in elections. Lujan is a cosponsor of the DISCLOSE Act and the Democracy for All Amendment, which would amend the Constitution. ‘Five years ago, Citizens United opened up the floodgates of special-interest money into our political system. Since that time, we’ve seen the rise of Super PACs that can spend unlimited amounts of money while hiding their donors and preventing the American people from finding the truth behind where their money comes from,’ Congressman Lujan said. ‘The legislation I am supporting would increase transparency in our electoral system and restore accountability, while ensuring that a wealthy few do not drown out the voices of the American people.’” [Luján press release, 1/21/15]

Consumer Issues

Significant Findings



Food Safety

Luján Joined Delegation In Opposing Food Safety Bill That Critics Claimed Favored Big Agriculture.

“When the US House of Representatives passed HR 2749 (the Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009) last week, it did so with the intent of giving teeth to a Food and Drug Administration that has traditionally been all gums when it comes to enforcing food safety. . . . More and better safety, inspection and enforcement policies have been a longtime coming, according to New Mexico farmer Steve Warshawer. But HR 2749 follows a one-size-fits-all theory that heavily favors big agriculture and potentially leaves small, regional food producers struggling to survive. . . . US Sens. Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall are ‘old hands at this,’ Warshawer says, and Reps. Ben Ray Lujan, Martin Heinrich and Harry Teague all voted against the bill (and against the Democratic establishment) because they see the downsides for New Mexico farmers and small food processors.” [Santa Fe Reporter, 8/5/09-8/11/09]

Crime and Public Safety Issues

Significant Findings

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Local Law Enforcement

Luján Voted Against Grayson Amendment To End Federal Program Allowing Military Equipment To Be Transferred To Local Police. “On a late night in June, the U.S. House of Representatives was debating a routine military spending bill when Rep. Alan Grayson offered an unusual amendment. The Florida Democrat asked his colleagues to end a federal program that allows the U.S. military to transfer - free of charge - its high-powered weaponry and other war fighting equipment to local police. . . . Grayson's House colleagues quickly trounced his amendment on a 355-62 vote with New Mexico Reps. Steve Pearce, a Republican, and Ben Ray Lujan, a Democrat, voting against it. Democratic Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham was in Albuquerque attending a funeral and missed the vote, her spokesman said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/24/14]

Luján Called For Review Of Military Equipment Transfers To Local Police In Wake Of Ferguson. “Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., agreed: ‘This situation has made it clear that a review of the policies and programs that have allowed the events of Ferguson to transpire - including the transfer of military equipment to police forces - is needed.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/24/14]

Marijuana

Luján Supported Medical Marijuana, Did Not Back Full Decriminalization. “Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., supports medical marijuana and backed an amendment that would prohibit the Justice Department from prosecuting people who are in compliance with their state's medical marijuana laws. He said drug policy should remain a priority. He does not support outright legalization ‘at this time,’ his spokesman told me. ‘Substance abuse -- and in particular prescription drug abuse and heroin use -- remains a great concern in New Mexico, and addressing this issue that tears too many families apart must continue to be a high priority for both the United States and Mexico,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 12/2/12]

Luján Said State Should “Watch Closely” Developments In Colorado & Washington Following Marijuana Legalization. “Asked about legalizing recreational marijuana use, as neighboring Colorado has done, Byrd said he is opposed, while Luján said New Mexicans should ‘watch closely’ the developments in Colorado and Washington.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/16/14]

Luján Said Marijuana Decriminalization Should Be Considered “In Some Instances.” “Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, a Democrat, said ‘the data is showing there should definitely be more support for decriminalization in some instances, but I still want to see everything that's out there.’ Lujan also pointed to a 2013 vote of Congress to remove hemp - a type of cannabis sativa used to make rope, wax, paper and other products - from the list of federally controlled substances as a sign of change. ‘I would say that's a reflection that at least some elected officials that represent the United States have changed their approach to the way they are looking at this subject and are open to conversation,’ Lujan said.” [Editorial, Albuquerque Journal, 8/3/14]

Defense Issues

Significant Findings

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Cybersecurity & Surveillance Issues

Luján Voted For Measure To Defund NSA Mass Surveillance Program. “The state's House delegation, Democratic U.S. Reps. Ben Ray Luján, Michelle Lujan Grisham and Republican Steve Pearce, also are calling for less NSA spying and more accountability. All three voted last summer to defund the NSA mass surveillance program, through an amendment to the Defense Department's annual appropriation bill that failed narrowly.” [Editorial, Santa Fe New Mexican, 12/19/13]

Defense Authorization & Funding

Luján Voted Against 2013 Defense Authorization Bill, Objected To Efforts To Exempt Defense Funding From Sequestration. “New Mexico's U.S. House Democrats parted ways last week on a defense authorization bill President Barack Obama has threatened to veto. Rep. Martin Heinrich voted with most House Republicans for the 2013 defense authorization bill on Friday, while fellow Democrat Rep. Ben Ray Luján voted against it. . . . Luján said the defense measure is counter to the spirit of a federal debt deal Congress reached last summer that could require deep Pentagon cuts. ‘The bill is another step in Republicans' efforts to undermine the sequester they agreed to by increasing military spending in exchange for deeper cuts to education, health care and investments in innovation that will negatively impact New Mexico's families,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/22/12]

Education Issues

Significant Findings

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Charter Schools

Luján Backed Legislation To Help Create New Charter Schools. “New Mexico's U.S. House members plan to vote for a rare, bipartisan education bill on the House floor today that would help create new charter schools across the country. The bill would authorize \$300million per year from 2015 through 2020 and consolidate two existing federal programs. It would also encourage replication of existing high-quality charter schools and help pay for new buildings. Charter schools, which often boast higher student achievement than regular public schools, typically use taxpayer dollars but are run by outside organizations. Critics contend they siphon money from low-performing schools that need it most. Reps. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Ben Ray Luján, both New Mexico Democrats, told the Journal this week that they will work to ensure any federal charter school law contains mechanisms for ‘transparency and accountability.’ Rep. Steve Pearce, R-N.M., supports the bill.” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/8/14]

Legislation Included Luján Provision To Encourage Teacher Training & Mentoring In STEM.

“Luján said the bill contains a proposal he offered in the last Congress that calls for charter schools to establish plans for teacher training and mentoring in science, technology, engineering and math. ‘Our nation's competitiveness depends upon our ability to educate our students, and while charter schools can offer innovative educational programs, it is important that they are held to the same accountability and transparency standards as traditional public schools,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/8/14]

Luján Pledged To Ensure Any Federal Charter School Law Has Mechanisms For “Transparency And Accountability.” “It is important to note that the charter school movement has had problems and bad actors - schools that use tax dollars to pay multiple salaries to individuals and/or don't deliver on their mission. But New Mexico Democratic Reps. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Ben Ray Luján recognize the importance of improving the state's perennially near-bottom rankings and say they will work to ensure any federal charter school law has mechanisms for ‘transparency and accountability.’ That's all any parent, taxpayer, business leader, government official and great teacher should want - a system that wisely uses the finite amount of education spending available to best serve students by preparing them for infinite possibilities in postsecondary education and/or the workplace.” [Editorial, Albuquerque Journal, 5/13/14]

No Child Left Behind

Luján: “We Need To Scrap No Child Left Behind.” “‘We need to scrap No Child Left Behind,’ Luján said. ‘Education is more than a test score. We have to get back to teaching them to think.’ Congress should follow New Mexico's lead and set a minimum, living wage for teachers. Luján said he would push for national ‘teachers corps’ program similar to the Peace Corps that would bring qualified teachers to rural districts struggling to find teachers.” [Taos News, 12/27/07]

Luján Denounced No Child Left Behind Program. “Luján has denounced No Child Left Behind, the federal legislation that gauges schools' performance through regular standardized testing, but he supports the Department of Education. ‘There's important investments made in education from the federal government, and New Mexico benefits from those investments,’ he said. Luján said schools will improve with the eradication of No Child Left Behind - or at least an overhaul of the legislation - so that teachers can focus less on testing and more on critical thinking and creativity.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/10/10]

Luján Warned Against NCLB Reforms That Drastically Reduced” Federal Government Oversight Of Education. “In Journal interviews last week, Udall and the three other Democrats in New Mexico's congressional delegation agreed the NCLB law needs to be rewritten and standardized testing de-emphasized - at least somewhat. But they also cautioned against stripping away too much federal oversight as part of the legislative overhaul. The Department of Education uses testing and achievement scores to track progress. ‘It's important that the federal role in education is not drastically reduced,’ said Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M. ‘That's one of the most important roles of the federal government - oversight.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 2/1/15]

Teacher Pay

Luján Supported Federal Minimum Wage For Teachers. “Lujan said he would advocate "progressive values" in Washington, pushing for universal health care, a federal minimum salary for teachers and an end to the Iraq war.” [Albuquerque Journal, 12/15/07]

Election 2004

Significant Findings

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Campaign Finance

Primary Opponent Attacked Luján For Taking Thousands In Contributions From Lobbyists For Industries Regulated By PRC. “Candidate Bob Perls of Corrales is knocking Ben Ray Lujan of Santa Fe -- son of House of Representatives Speaker Ben Luján of Nambé -- for taking thousands of dollars from lobbyists who represent industries regulated by the commission. . . . In campaign-finance reports filed this week, Lujan lists contributions from lobbyists who represent cell-phone-service providers, health-insurance providers, gasoline distributors and others.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 5/29/04]

PRC Candidates & Members Are Prohibited From Accepting Contributions Directly From Individuals & Companies With Service Charges Regulated By PRC. “The New Mexico Constitution prohibits candidates for the PRC as well as sitting commissioners from accepting anything of value from persons or entities whose charges for service are regulated by the commission. The commission regulates electrical utilities, telecommunications companies, the insurance industry and public transportation. Despite that prohibition, the New Mexico attorney general's office has said it's permissible for registered lobbyists who represent companies regulated by the commission to contribute their personal funds to candidates and commissioners.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 5/29/04]

Luján Returned Contribution From Gasoline Refining Company That Operated Pipelines Regulated By PRC. “Lujan reported a \$300 contribution from Giant Industries, a gasoline-refining company. The company operates pipelines in the state that are regulated by the PRC's pipeline-safety division. Gary Kilpatrick, a Santa Fe lawyer and registered lobbyist for Giant, said Friday that the donation to Lujan's campaign was legal because the commission doesn't regulate the amount Giant may charge for its services although the commission may oversee aspects of Giant's pipelines. Nonetheless, when asked about the Giant contribution Friday, Lujan spokesman Juan Rios said the campaign returned the money Wednesday. Rios provided a copy of the reimbursement check to the company but the repayment was not listed on financial reports the Lujan campaign filed with the New Mexico secretary of state's office Thursday and Friday.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 5/29/04]

Inexperience

Santa Fe Reporter Endorsed Luján's Primary & General Election Opponents, Said Luján Was “Significantly Less Knowledgeable.” “Gonzales faces off with Ben Ray Lujan, the Democrat who won the June primary. Lujan has the backing of his father, powerful House Speaker Ben Lujan. Some say the only reason Lujan Jr. won the primary was his father's clout, name recognition and the governor's support. Those people probably have a point, but that is neither here nor there. We can't really tell you much about Lujan Jr.'s views right now, because he never showed up for his general election endorsement interview.* When we interviewed him for the primary, we felt he was significantly less knowledgeable than opponent Bob Perls, whom we did endorse. Whether Lujan won the primary because of his connections isn't our call. Right now, all we know is that Gonzales has more experience, more education and would bring a fresh, unique perspective to a body desperately in need of it.” [Editorial, Santa Fe Reporter, 10/27/04-11/2/04]

Nepotism

Ben Ray Luján & Speaker Luján Shared Mailing Address With Separate Homes On Family Compound And Speaker Luján Filed Campaign Finance Report For Ben Ray Luján. “Ben Ray Lujan shares a mailing address with his father in Nambé. They live in separate houses at the family compound, said Lujan spokesman Juan Rios. Political funds controlled by Speaker Ben Lujan pumped \$1,000 into his son's campaign this month, records on file with the Bureau of Elections show. And the senior Lujan filed his son's campaign-finance report at the Bureau of Elections last week.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 10/20/04]

Gonzales: Luján Got Multiple State Jobs As A Result Of His Father's Influence. “Speaking of Lujan's recent jobs in state government, Gonzales said it's clear Lujan is over his head and only received the state jobs through family ties. ‘His saying that these were not politically motivated, I think it's a failure on his part to recognize what these positions are,’ Gonzales said of Lujan's state jobs. ‘Not only what these positions are, but that he acquired those positions based on who his father is. For him to deny that, I don't think he's naive. I think he's trying to fool people.’” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 10/20/04]

Election 2008

Significant Findings

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Campaign Finance

Luján Was Only Democratic Candidate To Accept Money From Private Prison Lobby. “Meanwhile, frustration mounted among the field of Democratic congressional hopefuls to replace US Rep. Tom Udall in District 3 when Ben Ray Luján won AFSCME's endorsement, although he was the only candidate to accept money from the prison privatization lobby, one of the union's Many believed the fix was in for Ben Ray, son of New Mexico's powerful Speaker of the House Ben Luján Sr.” [Santa Fe Reporter, 12/24/08-1/6/09]

Headline: Albuquerque Journal: “Son Cashes In On His Dad's Connections: House speaker's son has strong support from state lobbyists.” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/24/08]

More Than Two Dozen State Lobbyists Who Gave To Ben Luján Contributed To Ben Ray Luján's Congressional Campaign. “Congressional hopeful Ben Ray Lujan shares more than just a name with his father, state House Speaker Ben Lujan. They also share many campaign contributors. More than two dozen of the lobbyists and other supporters who gave to the speaker's 2006 campaign and political fund have also given to his son, according to a Journal analysis of state and federal campaign finance reports. . . . Several Roundhouse lobbyists were among those listed as hosts, along with Speaker Lujan, on an invitation for a fundraiser last month at a private home in Corrales. The campaign reported receiving \$25,050 the day of the fundraiser, as well as \$36,300 the day after.” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/24/08]

Luján Received At Least \$34,000 From State-Registered Lobbyists. “Ben Ray Lujan's Federal Election Commission report reads like a who's who of state Democrats, while state-registered lobbyists have pumped about \$34,000 into his campaign coffers.” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/24/08]

Luján Campaign Rejected Contributions From Companies & Lobbyists With Matters Before PRC. “Campaign aides say the candidate does not accept money from companies regulated by the Public Regulation Commission, of which the younger Lujan is a member, or their lobbyists. But records show the campaign received \$1,300 from Tom Horan, who represents Presbyterian Health Plan and numerous other clients. Campaign spokesman Carlos Trujillo said the money would be returned if that's the case.” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/24/08]

Luján's Opponent Slammed Him For Accepting Money From Local Bank Investigated By FBI For Controversial Insurance Asset Contract. “During the campaign, he took heat from his opponent over an FBI investigation into a controversial insurance asset contract with a local bank that contributed, ultimately, to the conviction of a deputy insurance superintendent on corruption charges and the resignation of former Insurance Superintendent Eric Serna.” [BestWire, 11/17/08]

State Department Of Transportation Worker Sent Luján Fundraising Invite From Government Email. “A state Department of Transportation spokesman said the department will look into whether a DOT employee has been using state time or equipment for a political campaign. The Journal received an anonymous fax Tuesday with a copy of a message sent from a state government e-mail address by DOT worker Eric Lujan, who has run for Santa Fe City Council, to David Montoya of the New Mexico Democratic Club. Lujan informs Montoya in the e-mail, which is stamped as sent at 11:43 a.m. Sept. 9., that he is hosting two events for Ben Ray Lujan, the Democratic nominee for the 3rd Congressional District seat. The e-mail says one is a private fundraiser and the other is a free public event. ‘We would like to see an attendance of 1,000 to 1,500 people so were (sic) coordinating with all the

counties in the 3rd congressional district to make this attendance a reality,' Lujan wrote. 'Anything you can do to help us out would be greatly appreciated.'" [Albuquerque Journal, 10/15/08]

Luján Campaign Condemned Email, Cancelled Fundraiser. "Mark Nicastre, a spokesman for the Ben Ray Lujan campaign, said the campaign 'does not condone the inappropriate use of state resources' for political purposes and has told supporters not to conduct campaign work on state time or with state resources. Because of the questions raised over Eric Lujan's e-mail, Nicastre said late Tuesday, the campaign has canceled the fundraiser." [Albuquerque Journal, 10/15/08]

Luján Hired Private Investigator To Conduct Research On Himself, Opponents. "Don Wiviott's congressional campaign is criticizing rival Ben Ray Lujan for hiring a private investigator to research Lujan and his opponents. 'In politics, one of the sleaziest and most sordid things you can do is hire a private investigator,' Wiviott spokesman Webster Cash said Wednesday. . . . 'This is a standard campaign practice,' said Lujan spokeswoman Mona Blaber. Blaber said the investigator has researched not only other candidates but Lujan himself, so that the campaign knows what sort of attacks to expect. In November, the Lujan campaign paid Albuquerque private investigator Mike Corwin \$750 for research, according to the campaign's final 2007 report to the Federal Elections Commission." [Albuquerque Journal, 4/3/08]

Headline: Albuquerque Journal: "Wiviott Campaign Criticizes Rival: Lujan Hired An Investigator."
[Albuquerque Journal, 4/3/08]

Education

2008 Primary Opponent Called On Luján To Release College Transcripts. "Don Wiviott on Tuesday stepped up his criticism of a chief rival for the Democratic nomination in the 3rd Congressional District, releasing a second TV attack ad blasting Ben Ray Lujan. Wiviott also called on Lujan, a member of the Public Regulation Commission, to release his college transcripts from New Mexico Highlands University." [Albuquerque Journal, 5/28/08]

Luján Campaign Declined To Release Records, Would Confirm Proof Of Graduation. "The Lujan campaign declined to release his college grades, saying it was a distraction. But aides said they would provide proof of Lujan's graduation as soon as the candidate returns from the campaign trail. The campaign said that 'Lujan will be happy to send Don Wiviott an autographed photo, suitable for framing, of Commissioner Lujan holding his college diploma.'" [Albuquerque Journal, 5/28/08]

College President Confirmed Luján Met Degree Requirements. "Luján, 35, enrolled at Highlands in 1997 and received his bachelor's degree in December 2007, according to university spokesman Sean Weaver. University President James Fries said Luján had met all degree requirements." [Albuquerque Journal, 5/28/08]

Nepotism

Democratic Primary Opponent Slammed Luján For Nepotism, Missing Commission Meetings & Out-Of-State Travel. "Both Luján and Wiviott advertised heavily on broadcast television. In the final weeks, the on-air campaign turned negative. Wiviott mocked Luján as a former blackjack dealer whose father got him high-level state jobs. The Wiviott ads attacked Luján for missing most meetings of a state commission to which he was appointed and for traveling out-of-state on PRC business." [Santa Fe New Mexican, 6/4/08]

Primary Opponent Ran Ad Attacking Luján For Background As Casino Dealer, Painted Luján As Product Of Political Patronage. "Don Wiviott has put some new chips on the table in the 3rd Congressional District race, with an advertisement that plays up a key opponent's background as a casino card dealer. Wiviott's salvo against Public Regulation Commissioner Ben Ray Lujan -- the first television attack ad of the campaign -- also attempts to dismiss Lujan as a product of political patronage. . . . The ad begins with a narrator asserting that most New Mexicans work hard 'to make it on their own.' 'Not Ben Ray Lujan Jr.,' the narration continues. 'Lujan was a

blackjack dealer in Las Vegas before his famous father got him a state job.’ Lujan is the son of New Mexico House Speaker Ben Lujan.” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/20/08]

Luján Worked As Casino Card Dealer In Pojoaque And Near Lake Tahoe From 1993-1997. “When a reporter asked earlier this month whether Luján had been a blackjack dealer, Nicastre said Luján had worked jobs including as a dealer at a Pojoaque Pueblo casino from 1994 to 1998. Nicastre on Monday said he misspoke when he provided the Pojoaque employment dates for a profile of Luján that ran in Sunday's New Mexican. He said Monday that Luján worked at the pueblo from 1993 to 1995. The Wiviott ad says Luján was a blackjack dealer in Las Vegas from 1995 to 1997, which had been reported in a 2004 profile of Luján in The New Mexican. Nicastre on Monday confirmed Luján worked as a dealer in a casino in Nevada -- at Lake Tahoe, he said, not Las Vegas -- from 1995 to 1997.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 5/20/08]

Primary Opponent Accused Speaker Luján Of Working Behind The Scenes To Mount Legal Challenges To Ballot Eligibility Of Ben Ray Luján’s Opponents. “Legal challenges made against two candidates for the District 3 Congressional seat have raised questions about state election laws and charges Rep. Ben Lujan is maneuvering to secure the nomination for his son, Ben Ray Lujan. The lawsuits revolve around the validity of signatures on nominating petitions for Rudy Martín, a Dixon attorney, and Santa Fe builder Don Wiviott. . . . Martín charged Speaker Lujan is working behind the scenes to keep challengers to his son off the state primary election ballot.” [Taos News, 3/6/08]

Speaker Luján Denied Involvement In Lawsuits. “‘Why would I want to get him out of the race,’ Speaker Lujan said in response to Martín's accusation. ‘I had no knowledge about this until I saw it in the paper.’ Lujan emphasized that he had no participation in bringing either lawsuit.” [Taos News, 3/6/08]

NM GOP: Speaker Luján Flipped Position On Ballot Access, Announced Support For Restricting Access While Ben Ray Luján Was Running For Congress. “Today, Democrat House Speaker Ben Lujan told political blogger Heath Haussamen that he will support changes to a law that restricts ballot access in the upcoming legislative session, in favor of allowing candidates who do not get 20% of their party's support at their pre-primary nominating convention to pursue another method of getting on the ballot. Prior to today, Lujan has staunchly opposed changing the measure, with many speculating that his son, Ben Ray Lujan, could benefit from restrictive ballot access laws in his race for the 3rd congressional district. “ [NM GOP press release, 1/8/08]

Personal Life

Headline: Albuquerque Journal: “Candidates Clash Over Gay Question.” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/22/08]

Primary Opponent Benny Shendo Accused Luján Of Hiding That He Was Gay, Hiring Someone To Pose As His Girlfriend. “Congressional candidate Benny Shendo Jr. is under fire after raising questions about opponent Ben Ray Luján's sexual orientation and whether Luján has been honest about it. Shendo triggered the furor during a candidate forum earlier this week in Farmington, and a top Shendo campaign staffer went so far as to suggest Luján's family had hired a woman to pose as his girlfriend at public functions. . . . Addressing Luján at the Farmington event on Monday, Shendo said: ‘You say you stand up for the people of New Mexico. And I want to know how you can stand up for the people of New Mexico if you can't stand up to your mom and dad about your lifestyle.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/22/08]

Luján Campaign Responded Luján Was Not Gay, Had Longtime Girlfriend Who Appeared At Events With Him – Opponent’s Claims Were “Desperate And Low-Class.” “The Luján campaign Wednesday denied the candidate was gay and said he has a longtime girlfriend frequently seen on the campaign trail. A Luján spokesman called Shendo's question at the Farmington debate ‘desperate and low-class’ and said the incident should be a ‘nonstory’ as far as media coverage goes.” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/22/08]

Shendo Claimed Luján's Sexuality Was "Public Knowledge." "Shendo's camp said Luján's sexuality and the questions about his girlfriend are 'public knowledge' but couldn't offer proof. Shendo's Wednesday statement said: 'If all the people who have known Ben Ray over the years at the statehouse, in the community and in his own extended family, and have known for years and accepted him as gay are wrong, that's perfectly fine. His sexuality is not the issue here.'" [Albuquerque Journal, 5/22/08]

PRC

Independent Candidate Criticized Luján For Corruption Issues At PRC & State Treasurer's Office. "Miller asked Lujan about corruption at the state Treasurer's Office and the Public Regulation Commission during his tenure at those agencies and whether he had 'missed' the misdeeds. Lujan said that, at the PRC, he had adopted a national code of conduct and that there's a new state insurance superintendent since a deputy superintendent was charged and convicted of public corruption. But Miller countered that 'it was the media' and federal authorities that brought up the problems at the two agencies, 'not anyone inside.'" [Albuquerque Journal, 10/20/08]

Headline: Associated Press: "Miller questions Lujan on corruption." [Associated Press, 10/20/08]

Luján Campaign Initially Stood By Democratic PRC Nominee Jerome Block Jr. In Wake Of Previously Undisclosed Arrest Record. "After the first story broke about Block's previously undisclosed arrest for riding with an intoxicated driver and citation for urinating in public [Outtakes, June 25: 'Failure to Appear'], Luján's campaign stood by Block, telling the New Mexico Independent: 'Ben Ray Luján supports a strong Democratic ticket with candidates that will stand up for New Mexico and that includes Jerome Block Jr.' Indeed, earlier in the general election cycle, Luján and Block appeared at joint campaign events. Now, however, Luján's campaign says it has not endorsed and has no plans to endorse in the PRC race." [Santa Fe Reporter, 9/17/08-9/23/08]

Democratic Opponent Attacked Luján For Taxpayer Funded Trips On PRC. "Wiviott's new TV spot follows an initial commercial released last week that criticized Lujan. In the new ad, the announcer says over footage of sandy beaches and Reno casinos, 'Lujan used our money to fly to Miami, a pattern of taxpayerfunded trips from Reno to San Diego on top of his \$90,000 salary.' A Lujan spokesman said the three trips mentioned in the ad were work-related: two were training for regulatory commissioners and the third was the annual meeting of the National Association of Regulatory Commissioners." [Albuquerque Journal, 5/28/08]

State Treasurer's Office

Luján Served As Deputy Treasurer Under Treasurer Later Imprisoned For Kickback Scheme. "Lujan served as deputy treasurer under Michael Montoya but wasn't implicated in the kickback scandal that led to prison time for Montoya and his successor, state Treasurer Robert Vigil." [Associated Press, 10/20/08]

Headline: Associated Press: "Miller questions Lujan on corruption." [Associated Press, 10/20/08]

Elections (Non-Luján) & Politics

Significant Findings

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CHC

As CHC Recruitment Director, Luján Recruited Ruben Kihuen To Run For Nevada's 1st Congressional District, Called John Ocegüera A "Friend." "Have the maps been drawn?" said Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, who is in charge of recruitment for the CHC, and has been one of Kihuen's biggest national boosters. Lujan did not deny he'd been in touch with Titus in recent days, but he dodged questions about the substance of those conversations. 'Dina's a friend, Ruben's a friend, [state Senate Majority Leader Steven] Horsford's a friend, [Assembly] Speaker [John] Ocegüera's a friend,' Lujan said. 'Look, I want to encourage Ruben to get in there and get after this...we'll see what ultimately happens once ... people decide what districts they're going to be running in. I think we have to have the best candidates we can in each of those districts to get them into the Congress.'" [Las Vegas Sun, 11/2/11]

DCCC

NRCC Slammed Luján As "Uber-Liberal" Who Backed Amnesty, Tax Hikes & Expansion Of ACA. "While Democrats were congratulating Luján on Capitol Hill, officials at the National Republican Congressional Committee - the DCCC's counterpart - appeared pleased with the selection, as well - but for different reasons. Ian Prior, spokesman for the NRCC, said Luján is among the most liberal members of the House and his politics will fall flat with many Americans. 'In selecting Ben Luján to head the DCCC, Nancy Pelosi has chosen a member of the uber-liberal House Progressive Caucus who has routinely voted for budgets that include amnesty for illegal immigrants, tax rates as high as 49%, and a massive expansion of Obamacare,' Prior said. 'This pick will give rise to plenty of awkward moments on the 2016 campaign trail as Democrats in swing states will have to distance themselves from incoming Chairman Luján, the very person tasked with helping them get elected.'" [Albuquerque Journal, 11/17/14]

Luján: "I Will Never, Ever Abandon New Mexico. . . . I'm Always Grounded." "Meanwhile, Luján said he's studying the national political terrain and ready to jump enthusiastically into the new job. But he promises he'll always keep his feet in New Mexico. 'My dad (the late New Mexico House Speaker Ben Lujan) taught me the importance of taking care of the farm and home,' Luján said. 'That is my home. My mom is home. I have responsibility to her and I'm never going to abandon that. New Mexico is where I was born and raised, and I will never, ever abandon New Mexico. I'm always grounded,' he added." [Albuquerque Journal, 11/23/14]

House Leadership

Luján Appointed Chief Deputy Whip In 2013. "New Mexico Rep. Ben Ray Lujan has been appointed a chief deputy whip for the 113rd Congress. Whips are responsible for mobilizing the party vote on important bills before they come to the floor for a vote. They also act as a liaison between members and the caucus to build support for the Democratic agenda. In addition to Lujan, House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer appointed Reps. Keith Ellison and Terri Sewell to his team. Lujan, who represents northern New Mexico, says he looks forward to helping promote an agenda that creates jobs and opportunities for the American people." [AP, 1/5/13]

Election 2016

Santa Fe New Mexican: "Luján Didn't Outright Endorse Clinton." "The other Democrat in the delegation, U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján, didn't outright endorse Clinton. But through the Democratic Congressional Committee,

which he heads, Luján issued a news release that said, ‘If chosen as our presidential nominee, Hillary Clinton will bring experience and energy to the campaign trail that will turn out hard-working families in New Mexico and across the country, and excite a new generation of Democrats.’” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 4/19/15]

Election 2014

Luján Blamed Cantor Loss On Losing Touch With His District – “Members Need To Be Back Working In Their Districts.” “Rep. Steve Pearce, the delegation's only Republican, concurred: ‘It looks like Cantor just lost contact with the district. There was some immigration flashback, but it was more that he just wasn't in the district much. I go home a lot for this very reason. Voters can decide overnight 'you haven't been here much - see ya.' You need to be back and working with the people who elected you.’ Rep. Ben Ray Lujan echoed his colleague's remarks, saying, ‘Members need to be back working in their districts.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 6/15/14]

Energy Issues

Significant Findings

✓ XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Cap & Trade

Luján Backed Cap & Trade Legislation. “Lujan, by contrast, has voted for cap-and-trade legislation regulating greenhouse gas emissions.” [Santa Fe Reporter, 8/4/12-8/14/12]

Ethanol

Luján Opposed Corn-Based Ethanol, Backed Striking Ethanol From RES. “U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., told his Clovis constituents Thursday he does not support the use of ethanol derived from corn, and it should be stricken from the Renewable Energy Standard. ‘The question has been, ‘should food be used to operate machinery?’” Lujan said. ‘The growing consensus is that it shouldn’t.’ Lujan said during a stop at the Clovis-Carver Public Library that using corn for fuel takes away from the nation’s food supply, and in turn raises food, and cattle feed prices.” [Clovis News Journal, 8/23/13]

Keystone XL

Luján Introduced Amendment To Require Crude Transported Through Keystone Pipeline To Be Used Domestically. “Lujan offered an amendment that would require all crude oil transported by the pipeline to be used domestically. The amendment, which was rejected 13-31, ran into bipartisan opposition, with Republicans calling it a messaging amendment and another opportunity to force delays. Democrats Green, Matheson, Mike Doyle of Pennsylvania and Jerry McNerney of California voted with Republicans against Lujan’s amendment.” [CQ News, 4/17/13]

Luján Supported Amendment To Block Keystone Unless Committee Determined Project Would Reduce Price Of Gasoline Domestically. “The panel rejected, 16-31, an amendment by Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., that would prevent the bill from taking effect unless the Energy and Commerce Committee finds that operation of the Keystone XL pipeline would reduce the price of gasoline in the United States. ‘We should make sure the project will deliver,’ Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., said.” [CQ News, 4/17/13]

Mining

Luján Offered “Poison Pill” Amendment To Bill Intended To Approve Resolution Copper Mine. “Resolution Copper wants to swap 5,344 acres of land around Arizona for 2,422 acres of ore-rich federal land. The swap requires congressional action, and it appeared to be headed for House approval until Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., offered an amendment to allow the secretary of Interior to remove any areas he considers sacred or cultural. . . . If protection of sacred sites in the Resolution exchange is the only purpose, the Lujan amendment is superfluous. It can only be described as a poison pill. This land exchange would protect environmentally sensitive land currently owned by Resolution. It is expected to generate 3,700 jobs and \$61 billion in economic activity. And it protects the sacred site of Apache Leap. The House should reject Lujan’s amendment and advance a bill that does so much good.” [Editorial, Arizona Republic, 10/3/13]

Natural Gas

Luján Pushed Natural Gas As Primary Transportation Fuel. “Democratic Rep. Ben Ray Luján told Albuquerque business leaders Tuesday that the U.S. must look to natural gas as a primary transportation fuel to lower travel costs while boosting New Mexico's natural gas industry. Luján, the second-term representative representing northern New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District, told members of the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce that the nation must to commit to developing the infrastructure necessary to make natural gas a feasible alternative to gasoline, which is more expensive and produces more pollutants. ‘Why not make an investment that keeps those dollars at home?’ Luján said, referring to recently failed legislation that would have provided incentives for trucking fleets to switch to natural gas.” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/22/12]

Luján Backed Legislation To Provide Incentives For Buying & Building Natural Gas Vehicles. “San Juan County can strengthen its economy by retrofitting vehicles to run on natural gas and propane, U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan said Tuesday during a local visit. ‘It's a good concept,’ said Lujan, the Democratic representative for District 3. He said converting engines to burn natural gas or propane would create jobs and use New Mexico's resources to make money and keep it circulating locally. He supports the Natural Gas Act, which proposes incentives for buying and building natural-gas vehicles, he said. But the Farmington region needs fueling stations before large numbers of trucks, buses and cars can be converted, he said.” [Farmington Daily Times, 3/31/15]

Nuclear

Watchdog Group Criticized Luján For Backing Appropriations Bill That Provided Billions For NNSA's Weapons Programs. “Lawmakers in the House of Representatives last week approved the Fiscal Year 2014 Energy and Water Appropriations Act. All three representatives from New Mexico including Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) voted for it. ‘This funding is important to ensure the safety of the nuclear weapons stockpile as the United States reduces its stockpile under the new START Treaty,’ Lujan said. The bill provided \$7.7 billion for the NNSA's weapons program and \$2.1 billion for nonproliferation. . . . Jay Coghlan, director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, commented, ‘Congressman Ben Ray Luján should ask himself the question what good does a Cold War nuclear bomb that the for-profit labs want to endlessly tinker with do for New Mexican children? Pork for the labs should not drive nuclear weapons policies, especially when it's of little if any tangible benefit to average New Mexicans. Luján should, instead, dedicate himself to boosting funding for programs that would really help our children but are facing painful sequester cuts, such as education, medical care and food assistance. Those investments would really brighten their future, and help raise New Mexico from its shameful position as the worst state for kids.’” [Los Alamos Monitor, 7/13/13]

Headline: Los Alamos Monitor: “Critics blast Luján's nuclear stance.” [Los Alamos Monitor, 7/13/13]

Los Alamos Study Group Rep Slammed Luján For Voting Against Amendments To Move NNSA Nuclear Weapons Funding To Energy Accounts. “Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group said Lujan voted against at least six amendments that would moved funds from the NNSA nuclear ‘weapons activities’ account to energy, energy reliability and energy efficiency accounts. ‘In short, Rep. Lujan is a 100 percent status-quo nuclear man,’ Mello said. ‘The claims on his web site to be working for a ‘clean energy economy’ are not accurate and need to be very carefully parsed.’” [Los Alamos Monitor, 7/13/13]

Luján Spokesperson Defended Funding As Necessary To Ensure Safety Of Nuclear Weapons Stockpile. “Lujan spokesperson Andrew Stoddard responded to the accusations. ‘I would reiterate Rep. Luján's comment that this funding is important to ensure the safety of the nuclear weapons stockpile as the United States reduces its stockpile under the new START Treaty,’ Stoddard said. ‘And since they mention the important issues of sequestration and food assistance, I would also point out that Rep. Luján has voted against sequestration every step of the way and repeatedly voted for efforts to stop these devastating across-the-board cuts that are harming our economy and having a negative impact on New Mexico's families. Just today, he voted against House Republicans' farm bill that strips out funding for nutrition programs that help prevent our children from going to bed hungry.’” [Los Alamos Monitor, 7/13/13]

Luján Suggested Congress Proceed With Caution On Plan To Increase Production Of Plutonium Pits At Los Alamos To Replace Aging Pits. “Los Alamos National Laboratory, birthplace of the atomic bomb, could ramp up

production of triggers for nuclear weapons to levels not seen since the Cold War, if federal defense and energy officials get their way. The federal government sees the site atop a rugged canyon cliff overlooking the vast expanse of plateaus and distant hills in Northern New Mexico as the perfect place -- really, the only one -- for an ambitious mission to massively increase production of plutonium pits -- the softball-sized cores that can have the explosive power of the Nagasaki bomb. The pits are used to set off thermonuclear reactions in weapons tens of thousands of times more powerful than the pits themselves. The new pits would not be used for new weapons, proponents of the plan say, but to replace aging pits in the nation's nuclear stockpile. . . . Luján said he also embraces nonproliferation, but he believes the existing stockpile should be well maintained, and that Los Alamos should play a big role in that. But he did not commit to a firm position on the plan described in the report and said Congress should proceed cautiously. 'While this report discusses many of the factors that go into pit production, there are a number of questions that remain,' Luján said, 'along with the need for significant discussion and research to determine the best path forward.'" [Santa Fe New Mexican, 8/24/14]

Oil Drilling

Luján Expressed Reservations On Obama Administration Plan To Expand Domestic Oil Drilling. "Most of New Mexico's congressional delegation praised a White House plan to expand domestic oil drilling Wednesday, calling it a responsible way to increase energy independence while remaining dedicated to environmental protection. Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., expressed reservations that the plan would be the solution to America's dependence on foreign oil, although he did not criticize President Barack Obama directly. 'We must remember that the United States has just 2 percent of the world's reserves, and simply opening up and expanding offshore drilling will leave us far short of our goals of energy independence and national security,' said Luján, of the state's 3rd Congressional District." [Albuquerque Journal, 4/1/10]

Environmental Issues

Significant Findings

✓ XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Cattle Grazing

Luján Angered Environmental Groups By Siding With Cattle Grazers Against Forest Service In Fight Over Reduced Cattle Grazing Allotments. “The Almanac of American Politics states that Lujan ‘is known as a hard worker who has diligently ascended in his party's ranks. Lujan has a liberal voting record, but he has not been as far to the left as Udall,’ the book states. ‘He sided with northern New Mexico ranchers in 2011 in their fight against the U.S. Forest Service over reducing cattle-grazing allotments within the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests, a position that dismayed state environmental groups.’” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 10/11/14]

Ethics

Significant Findings

✓ XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Anthony Weiner

Luján Declined To Call On Weiner To Resign. “U.S. Reps. Ben Ray Luján and Martin Heinrich, both D-N.M., said they supported Pelosi's call for an ethics investigation. They told the Journal they were focused on the work of Congress and not Weiner's troubles. . . . Luján called the scandal ‘disappointing’ but would not say whether he should resign. ‘This situation is disappointing, and I support an investigation to determine if House rules were broken, but my focus right now is on my work in New Mexico to put people back to work and protect Medicare,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 6/8/11]

Campaign Contributions

AT&T

Luján Was One Of 72 House Dems That Signed Letter Supporting AT&T Merger – Received \$5000 From AT&T PAC. “The dispute leaves Democrats, who typically draw support from both groups, in a murky spot. AT&T's political donations, which amount to nearly \$1.3 million this year, typically lean Republican. But 72 Democratic congressmen signed a June letter to the Federal Communications Commission supporting the merger; 66 of those received AT&T donations. Among them was Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-Santa Fe, who pocketed \$5,000 from AT&T in 2010. Lujan hasn't spoken publicly about the merger. The rest of the state's congressional delegation, along with Gov. Susana Martinez, has also stayed quiet on the issue.” [Santa Fe Reporter, 11/16/11-11/22/11]

Downs Casino

The Downs Received 25-Year State Lease For Racetrack & Planned Casino. “Politics has been described as the way government divides the pie. And in trying to understand why politics works in certain ways, it can be helpful to look at relationships. So, today, we look more at the relationships between Republican Gov. Susana Martinez and The Downs at Albuquerque - selected by a board of gubernatorial appointees to receive a 25-year lease for the racetrack at the State Fairgrounds and a \$20 million casino it plans to build on the property.” [UpFront, Albuquerque Journal, 12/10/11]

Luján Received Nearly \$10,000 From Partners Of The Downs. “The new president is Bill Windham, a part owner of The Downs and a campaign contributor to Martinez and national GOP groups. . . . Lujan received \$2,300 in Downs-related campaign contributions a few years back, but there's a relationship that is more interesting. Windham and Turner sometimes give money to Democrats. Among the recipients: Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., the speaker's son. He has pocketed \$9,600 from The Downs partners since 2008.” [UpFront, Albuquerque Journal, 12/10/11]

Speaker Ben Luján Pushed State Lease Deal With The Downs. “House Speaker Ben Lujan, D-Santa Fe, called a couple weeks ago to say the lease deal with The Downs was needed, because the casino construction would provide needed jobs. I can't recall the last time he phoned.” [UpFront, Albuquerque Journal, 12/10/11]

Luján Worked As HR Manager At The Downs From 2001-2002. “A 1990 Pojoaque Valley High School graduate, Luján worked in various casinos from 1993-99 then had stints as marketing director for New Mexico Legislative Reports (1999-2001) and human resources manager at the Downs at Albuquerque (2001-02). Luján didn't have a college degree until after he was elected to the PRC in 2004.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/20/10]

Congressional Pay

Luján Cosponsored Congressional Pay Freeze. “Congressman Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico's Third District released the following statement today after cosponsoring H.R. 3858, legislation that blocks a cost-of-living adjustment for members of Congress and freezes their pay for the next fiscal year. ‘During these tough times, while too many New Mexicans are still looking for work and families are struggling to get by, members of Congress should not be getting an automatic pay raise. It is critical that as public servants, we make it clear to the American people that our focus is on turning our economy around and putting them back to work, not enhancing our own bottom line. Freezing the pay of members of Congress while our constituents are still suffering from the deepest recession in a generation will help send that message. I encourage the Republican leaders in the House to bring this legislation up for a vote without delay.’” [Luján press release, 2/11/12]

Lobbyists

Luján Committed To Not Accepting Campaign Contributions From Congressional Lobbyists. “‘K-Streeters’ is Washington, D.C.-speak for lobbyists. Luján has made it a policy not to accept campaign contributions from congressional lobbyists.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 12/10/11]

Luján Fundraising Notices Declared Committee Would Not Take Federal Lobbyist Money. “Like other politicians eager to show the public they're not beholden to Washington's special interests, Democratic Rep. Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico has proudly refused to take campaign contributions from federal lobbyists. The fine print on his fundraising notices made clear that ‘People for Ben does not accept contributions from registered federal lobbyists,’ a stance that won him praise from editorial writers in his home state as recently as February.” [Washington Times, 5/16/11]

Dec. 2011: Luján Hosted Lobbyist Fundraiser For Congressional Hispanic Caucus PAC. “Luján hosted a reception for the caucus' political committee earlier this week at the headquarters of Cornerstone Government Affairs, a Washington, D.C., lobbying firm. The invitation, available on the Sunlight Foundation's ‘Party Time’ website, which tracks congressional fundraisers, asked for contributions of \$1,000 to \$5,000. The committee has raised \$286,740 this year, according to the group's most recent Federal Election Commission filing.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 12/10/11]

Headline: Frontrunner: “New Mexico Democrat Lujan Shifts On Lobbyists' Donations.” [Frontrunner, 5/16/11]

Headline: Washington Times: “Lawmaker decides to take cash of lobbyists.” [Washington Times, 5/16/11]

Luján Was Feature Speaker At CHC BOLD PAC Held At DC Lobbyist's House. “Yet on a recent evening, Mr. Lujan was the featured lawmaker at a Cinco de Mayo-themed political fundraiser held in the Capitol Hill home of a prominent Washington lobbyist, Robert Raben. The fundraiser benefited the Committee for Hispanic Causes, also known as the CHC BOLD PAC, a political action committee chaired by Mr. Lujan. More than a dozen other lawmakers were mentioned on the invitation to the fundraiser.” [Washington Times, 5/16/11]

Invitation To May 2011 Luján Fundraiser Did Not Include Warning Against Taking Lobbyist Money. “But the warning to lobbyists to stay away appears nowhere on an invitation to an upcoming fundraiser May 20-22, dubbed a ‘Santa Fe Weekend Getaway’ and asking for \$2,500 per contributor - transportation, lodging and expenses not included. The getaway will include a ‘welcome dinner, breakfast and art gallery reception with Congressman Lujan ... plus opportunities to visit Santa Fe's famed museums, art galleries, shops, nearby casinos and golf courses,’ the invitation said. The invitations to Mr. Lujan's fundraiser were made public by the nonpartisan

Sunlight Foundation, which tracks political fundraising activities among federal candidates.” [Washington Times, 5/16/11]

Luján Spokesman Confirmed Luján Had Changed Position On Lobbyist Money – “We Must Have The Resources Necessary To Fight Back.” “A Lujan spokesman pointed out that Mr. Raben wasn't in attendance, but acknowledged that the congressman's position on taking campaign cash from lobbyists had changed. ‘In the wake of the [Supreme Court's] Citizens United case, which allows millions of dollars from secretive third-party organizations to flow into our electoral system with no accountability, we must have the resources necessary to fight back, stand up for the people of New Mexico and - given his responsibility as chair of BOLD PAC - elect Democratic members to Congress,’ spokesman Andrew Stoddard wrote in email to The Washington Times.” [Washington Times, 5/16/11]

Public Citizen Rep: Luján’s Decision To Take Lobbyist Money A “Violation Of His Pledge.” “Craig Holman, legislative representative for the D.C.-based watchdog group Public Citizen, called Mr. Lujan's decision to take lobbying contributions ‘a violation of his pledge’ not to do so.” [Washington Times, 5/16/11]

Luján Was Supported In 2008 Campaign By More Than 2 Dozen Lobbyists & Campaign Contributors That Supported His Father. “In the 2008 race to succeed Udall, he campaigned energetically while taking advantage of his family connections -- the Albuquerque Journal reported in April 2008 that more than two dozen lobbyists and other campaign contributors who gave to the elder Lujan also donated to his son -- to easily beat five other primary candidates with more than 41 percent of the vote.” [CQ, 7/16/10]

Lobbyist For Bechtel Group Contributed \$500 To Luján In 2010. “Among Luján's top contributors is the Bechtel Group, a San Francisco-based international construction company that is part of the team that manages Los Alamos National Laboratory. The company has contributed a total of \$5,000 to Luján's campaign this year. Bernie Toon, a lobbyist for the company from Arlington, Va., contributed another \$500 to Luján.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 7/16/10]

Menendez

Luján Donated \$2500 Contribution From NJ Sen. Menendez To Santa Fe Charities. “Count Rep. Ben Ray Luján, a New Mexican who chairs the DCCC, among that group. Luján's spokesman told me last week he would donate \$2,500 he received from Menendez in 2008 to charities in Santa Fe. ‘The campaign will donate the money to two local organizations that are doing great work supporting our veterans - Horses for Heroes in Santa Fe and Not Forgotten Outreach in Taos,’ Luján spokesman Andrew Stoddard said. Horses for Heroes bills itself as a ‘horsemanship, wellness and skill-set restructuring program based in Santa Fe, NM free to all post 9/11 veterans and active military (both men and women) especially those who have sustained PTSD, physical injuries, or have experienced combat trauma during their time serving our country.’ The Not Forgotten Association describes itself as ‘a unique national tri-service charity which provides entertainment, leisure and recreation for the serving wounded, injured or sick and for ex-service men and women with disabilities.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/12/15]

Nepotism

CREW Report On Nepotism Included Luján For Campaign Payment To Brother’s Company For Telecom Installation. “US Reps. Ben Ray Lujan, D-NM, and Steve Pearce, R-NM, are included in a Washington, DC - based ethics group's list of 248 US House of Representative members- 105 Democrats and 143 Republicans- identified for flexing their political muscles to financially support their kin. The report, by the nonprofit Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, found that the named representatives paid a total of \$5.6 million directly to family members and \$3.1 million to family businesses or nonprofits during the 2008 and 2010 elections. . . . The report finds that Lujan's 2008 election committee, People for Ben, paid \$3,465 to Integrated Electric and Utility, a company owned by Lujan's brother, Jerome. In an email to SFR, Lujan spokesman Andrew Stoddard explains that, early on, the campaign needed to install internet and phones in an old building.” [Santa Fe Reporter, 4/18/12-4/24/12]

Personal Wealth

2011: Luján Had Fewer Financial Assets Than When He Entered Congress – Estimated Net Worth Between \$50,001-\$234,999. “Meanwhile, U.S. Rep Ben Ray Luján, D-Santa Fe, actually has fewer financial assets than he did when he entered Congress in 2007 and has a long way to go before he could ever hope to join the congressional ‘millionaire club.’ . . . When he first came to Congress in 2007, Luján's net worth was between \$50,001 and \$234,999. But according to his 2010 report, his net worth is at least \$16,000 but no more than \$65,000. The major factor in this decline is that in his 2007 report, Luján reported real estate in El Rancho valued at \$100,001 to \$250,000. However, he quit listing that property as an asset in subsequent reports. Lujan's only assets listed are his New Mexico Public Employees' Retirement Association account and a checking account at Wells Fargo bank.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 12/31/11]

Pfizer Press Conference

Luján Cancelled Press Conference To Introduce Guide For Uninsured Paid For By Pfizer. “It was a classic case of bad timing. Last week there was a news release announcing that U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján would be at the state Capitol to help unveil a new publication called the New Mexico Health Guide: Resources for the Uninsured. This is a ‘comprehensive listing of health care resources that are available to help uninsured and underinsured residents of New Mexico meet their health care needs, providing contact information and health tips in an easy-to-use and easy-to-read format.’ Sounds innocuous enough. Might even help some people. The guide was paid for by Pfizer Helpful Answers, a nonprofit wing of the very profitable Pfizer pharmaceutical company, and the Colorado chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses. The news conference was scheduled for today. But by Wednesday night, Luján canceled his appearance due to ‘the recent events regarding the parent company of the foundation’ that helped pay for the guide.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 9/3/09]

Pfizer Pled Guilty To Fraudulent Marketing, Paid Largest Criminal Fine In American History. “The ‘recent events’ actually occurred earlier in the day when Pfizer subsidiary Pharmacia & Upjohn Inc. pleaded guilty to a felony in a federal fraudulent marketing case and the two companies agreed to pay the largest criminal fine in American history. In addition to the \$1.2 billion criminal fine, Pfizer also agreed to pay \$1 billion in civil penalties and a \$100 million criminal forfeiture. The case against Pfizer involved four prescription drugs, including a painkiller Bextra. Prosecutors said the company promoted the drugs as treatments for conditions different from the ones for which they'd been approved.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 9/3/09]

Tucumcari Chamber Of Commerce

Tucumcari Chamber Of Commerce Donates Office Space For Luján Field Office For \$1/Year. “The commission also renewed the city's five-year lease agreement with Versa Tech Industries, a paving contractor, and the Tucumcari Chamber of Commerce's \$1-per-year sub-lease of office space to U. S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan. The office houses Lujan's field representative Ron Wilmot. . . . Patsy Gresham, executive director of the Tucumcari Chamber of Commerce, requested the continuation of the sublease for Rep. Lujan's office space. The chamber leases space from the city for its headquarters at Fifth Street and Route 66 Boulevard, and the chamber essentially donates the office for Rep. Lujan. 2014 Global Data Point.” [Energy Monitor Worldwide, 1/14/15]

Vigil FBI Investigation Accusations

Cop Convicted Of DWI Alleged In Arbitration Hearing That He Was Dismissed Because Of His Role In FBI Drug Investigation That Implicated City Manager. “In May 2010, Vigil was arrested for driving drunk on N.M. 599. Two breath tests showed that the detective's blood-alcohol concentration was as high as 0.16 percent, twice the presumed level of intoxication for a driver in New Mexico. Vigil was convicted of DWI in March 2011. . . . Rael recommended to Romero, the city manager, that Vigil be fired. Romero concurred and Vigil was terminated in May. During last month's arbitration hearing - part of the appeals process for the fired officer - Vigil argued he was dismissed because he had been part of an FBI drug investigation that targeted Romero.” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/7/11]

Headline: Albuquerque Journal: “Block: Luján Influenced Ex-Officer.” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/26/11]

City Manager & Deputy Police Chief Testified They Had Heard FBI Investigation Was Aimed At Luján, Several Officers & City Manager. “During the hearing, Deputy Police Chief Gillian Alessio testified that Vigil once told her both Romero and U.S. Rep Ben Ray Luján were subjects of an FBI probe. Romero, in his own testimony, acknowledged that he had heard shortly before firing Vigil in June that there was an FBI investigation of cocaine and prostitution aimed at several Santa Fe police officers, congressman Lujan and himself.” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/7/11]

Cop Charged With DWI Claimed PRC Member Jerome Block – Not Luján – Was Target Of FBI Investigation. “Both Vigil and his attorney, David Foster, have repeatedly said since the arbitration hearing that it was embattled Public Regulation Commissioner Jerome Block Jr. - not Luján - whom Vigil had learned was being investigated along with Romero.” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/7/11]

Deputy Police Chief Said She Was Certain Cop Named Luján, Not Block, As Target Of Investigation. “But Alessio says she is certain Vigil said Luján's name when he met with her. ‘Very clearly,’ the deputy chief said. ‘He said Ben Ray Luján and the city manager. I said, ‘OK, you understand what you're telling me?’ That's why I'm sure it's Ben Ray, because I actually questioned him on it.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/26/11]

PRC Member Block Claimed Luján & Speaker Luján Manipulated Cop Into Changing His Story To Accuse Block. “PRC Commissioner Jerome Block Jr. adamantly denied implications that he used cocaine or is a target of a drug investigation - an allegation raised by former Santa Fe police Detective James Vigil. Instead, Block leveled accusations at Rep. Ben Ray Luján, contending that he or his father somehow manipulated Vigil into changing his tune about who is being investigated by the FBI. Block said in an interview with the Journal that he is ‘tired of being a scapegoat for everyone - in this case Congressman Luján.’ . . . He added: ‘I think someone of influence got the ear of the detective and changed his story from Congressman Luján to myself. . . . Do I want to say he (Vigil) was threatened in any way by the Lujáns? Maybe so.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/26/11]

Luján Dismissed Accusations As Ridiculous,” “Absolutely Untrue.” “Ben Ray Luján's camp sternly denied the congressman has had any involvement with Vigil or is being investigated by the FBI. ‘This is absolutely untrue,’ said Luján's spokesman Andrew Stoddard. ‘It's another false accusation with no proof, no evidence. We have never spoken to or had any contact with the officer, his lawyer or anyone like that. It's just a ridiculous accusation, unfounded and unproven, from someone in desperation.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/26/11]

Luján: “I Don’t Know What Else I Need To Do To Clear My Name.” “Luján on Tuesday called the idea that he was under investigation outrageous and slanderous. Wednesday, he said that given what Vigil has told reporters, ‘I don't know what else I need to do to clear my name.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 8/25/11]

Luján Called Accusations Slanderous, Reckless. “Lujan, a New Mexico Democrat, described the accusations in a telephone interview with The Associated Press as unfounded, untrue, reckless, slanderous and ‘absolutely ridiculous.’ Lujan is in his second term representing New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District. ‘We're going to keep working as hard as we do and visiting with our constituency. But again, these are the worst kinds of distractions that could possibly be espoused by people who are telling outright lies,’ he said. ‘The slanderous nature of this, the reckless accusations, this is just ridiculous.’ . . . ‘You can image how upset and hurt I am about what's being said,’ the congressman said. ‘I'm sure you can hear the tone of my voice. This is just ridiculous.’” [AP, 8/24/11]

Speaker Luján Announced Appointment Of Subcommittee To Impeach PRC Member Block After Felony Campaign Malfeasance Charges. “State legislators are poised to mount an impeachment campaign against Public Regulation Commissioner Jerome D. Block Jr. Speaker of the House Ben Lujan announced Tuesday that he will appoint a subcommittee to consider impeachment proceedings against Block, a Democrat from Espanola. Lujan,

D-Santa Fe, said he would make the appointments of House members on Sept. 6, the first day of a special legislative session. Block is charged with felonies for election campaign malfeasance. More recently, the state began investigating him in the theft of gasoline on his state charge card.” [Las Cruces Sun-News, 8/24/11]

Foreign Policy Issues

Significant Findings



Afghanistan

Headline: Albuquerque Journal: “Luján Opposes More Troops in Afghanistan.” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/29/09]

Luján Urged Administration To Reject Troop Increase In Afghanistan. “The New Mexico Democrat signed a letter with 57 of his House colleagues last week urging President Barack Obama to reject a troop increase. Luján said he is worried that a longterm counterinsurgency would require hundreds of thousands of troops. . . . ‘We need to give support to the Afghan people through humanitarian and diplomatic means, but troop increases are troubling at this time,’ Luján said in a statement. ‘I urge the administration to reject a troop increase.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/29/09]

Cuba

Luján Called For “Concrete Steps” From Cuban Government In Response To Administration Plan To Ease Restrictions. “Luján said he hopes Cuba lives up to the expectation the U.S. will have in the new relationship. ‘It is important that we examine our relationship with Cuba and ensure that we are charting a path that encourages political freedom and respect for human rights,’ Luján said. ‘The changes President Obama outlined today must be met with concrete steps from the Cuban government that achieve these goals. I look forward to reviewing the President's plan in greater detail to assess the full impact it will have on the United States and Cuba.’” [Albuquerque Journal ,12/18/14]

ISIS

Luján: Any Authorization For Military Force Against ISIS Should Have Clear Goals & Exit, Not Commit Ground Troops. “As the White House prepares to ask Congress for a resolution formally authorizing U.S. military force against the Islamic State terror group, New Mexico's delegation is wary but eager to see details of the proposal. . . . Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., said, ‘Congress and the president must work together to ensure that any AUMF to address the threat of ISIL has clear goals, a clear exit, is precise, and does not commit U.S. combat troops on the ground. The path forward must also involve a greater commitment from our allies in the region and a focus on disrupting ISIL's access to funding and weapons. I will look closely at the AUMF to see if it meets these standards.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 2/11/15]

Israel

Luján Acknowledged “Concerns” With Scheduling & Timing Of Netanyahu Speech, Pledged Support For Israel. “Rep. Ben Ray Luján, a Democrat and the chairman of the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee, also said he will be there - grudgingly. ‘I plan to attend the Prime Minister's speech,’ Lujan said in a statement to the Journal on Friday. ‘I do, however have concerns with how this speech was scheduled and the timing. Our commitment to Israel must remain bipartisan. The failure to properly consult with the White House and Congressional Democrats needlessly injected partisan politics into this issue.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 3/1/15]

Luján Was One Of 22 House Members To Vote “Present” On Resolution Denouncing UN Report Accusing Israel Of War Crimes. “A U.N.-sponsored report that accuses both Hamas and Israel of war crimes - and is especially tough on Israel - was overwhelmingly denounced by the U.S. House last week, but Reps. Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Luján avoided an up or down vote on the issue. Instead of voting yea or nay, Heinrich of Albuquerque and Lujan of Santa Fe, both Democrats, voted ‘present.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 11/11/09]

Albuquerque Rabbi Said Luján Vote “Gives [Him] Some Concern.” “Rabbi Joe Black of Congregation Albert in Albuquerque said the fact Heinrich and Luján simply voted present ‘gives me some concern.’ ‘It’s important they understand all sides of this issue,’ Black told the Journal in a telephone interview Tuesday. ‘It doesn’t mean I think Israel could do no wrong, but I thought it (the report) was inappropriately critical of Israel and did not take into account the facts on the ground as I understood them.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 11/11/09]

Luján Office: House Resolution “Did Not Move Us Toward A Lasting Peace.” “Luján’s office provided the Journal with a similar response. ‘Rep. Luján is a strong supporter of Israel, a critical ally,’ said Mark Nicastre, Lujan’s spokesman. ‘Earlier this year, he supported the House Resolution 34, which recognized Israel’s right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza, reaffirmed the United States’ strong support for Israel, and supported the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. His present vote reflected the fact that the recent resolution did not move us toward a lasting peace, as should always be our goal.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 11/11/09]

Syria

Luján Offered Tentative Support For Obama Plan To Conduct Airstrikes In Syria. “Two of New Mexico’s congressional challengers are voicing opposition to President Barack Obama’s strategy to target Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria using airstrikes rather than American ‘boots on the ground.’ . . . Representatives Luján and Lujan Grisham voiced tentative support for Obama’s strategy. ‘I believe that Congress and the president must work together to ensure the strategy has clear goals, a clear exit, is precise, and does not commit U.S. combat troops on the ground,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/12/14]

Luján Broke With Delegation, Voted Against Measure To Arm Syrian Rebels. “The House voted a day earlier to approve equipping the Syrian rebels but, unlike in the Senate, their vote was separate from the domestic spending bill. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan voted against arming the rebels, while Reps. Steve Pearce and Michelle Lujan Grisham voted for it. Lujan said he supports air strikes against ISIS, but has ‘serious concerns’ about handing over U.S. arms to the rebels. ‘While the amendment calls for the vetting and reporting on every person recruited for training, it does not prevent individuals with ties to extremist or terrorist groups from participating,’ Lujan said. ‘I am also concerned that the conflict in the region has the potential to escalate and further entangle our country in a civil war in Syria.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/21/14]

Luján Expressed Concerns With NDAA Provisions To Equip & Train Syrian Rebels. “Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-Santa Fe, said although he had serious concerns with the current plan to equip and train Syrian rebels, he was happy the New Mexico provisions were added. ‘While I do not support everything in this bill, it does include important provisions that are key priorities for communities across New Mexico, including critical funding for environmental cleanup at Los Alamos National Laboratory,’ Lujan said in a statement.” [Associated Press, 12/5/14]

Gun Issues

Significant Findings

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Assault Weapon Ban

Luján Suggested Assault Weapon Ban Should Not Be A Priority. “Lujan also did not address the assault weapons ban issue in his initial statement. I asked his office for more clarity and they sent me this additional statement from Lujan, which seems to suggest he doesn't think such a ban should be a priority. The word I'm hearing on Capitol Hill today is that such a ban is seen as less politically feasible - especially in the GOP-controlled House - than other measures in the president's package of proposals. ‘I think it's important that we have discussions on all aspects of this debate and I'll closely examine any legislation that comes to the House floor, however, I believe that addressing the size of high-capacity magazines and implementing universal background checks are the most effective policies to stop massacres that have become too common in our society,’ Lujan said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 1/16/13]

Background Checks

Luján Backed Expanded Background Checks, Expressed Disappointment In Senate's Rejection Of Manchin-Toomey Provision. “Currently, mandatory background checks apply only to purchases from licensed firearms dealers. The so-called Manchin-Toomey amendment would have expanded the checks to include firearms purchased online or from advertisements, but not to guns acquired from friends and relatives. . . . New Mexico's Democratic U.S. House members -- Reps. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Ben Ray Luján -- condemned the Senate vote and urged Congress to keep pushing the issue. . . . ‘I was disappointed that the bipartisan amendment to expand background checks in an effort to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill failed to pass the Senate this afternoon,’ Luján said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/18/13]

Magazine Limits

Luján Backed Limits On High-Capacity Magazines After Initially Expressing Skepticism. “Luján said he supported Obama's call for universal background checks on gun buyers, as well as his call to restrict high-capacity magazines, although Luján was initially skeptical of such a proposal. ‘While I have expressed concern about limits on magazine capacity in the past, we have seen high-capacity magazines on any gun amplify the amount of destruction and loss of life that can be caused,’ Lujan said. ‘Focusing on the size of magazines is an important step to address these horrific events while taking into account 2nd Amendment rights and our responsibility to promote public safety.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 1/17/13]

NRA

NRA Endorsed Luján For Reelection In 2010, Citing Support For Conceal Carry Reciprocity. “The National Rifle Association's political action committee announced Monday that it wants voters to keep all three incumbent Democrats from New Mexico in the U.S. House of Representatives, including Rep. Ben Ray Luján of Santa Fe. . . . The NRA's political action committee said on its website that it endorsed Luján because he supported several pieces of gun legislation. These included a bill to ensure that a person who filed for bankruptcy wouldn't lose their firearms; and a bill to extend federal protection of states' right to allow people with state concealed-carry licenses to carry a concealed weapon in any state.” [Santa Fe New Mexican, 10/5/10]

Health Care Issues

Significant Findings

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Affordable Care Act

Luján: “If Improvements Need To Be Made To Make [ACA] Work Better, We Need To Do That.” “Rep. Ben Ray Luján, a Democrat, said he spent a lot of time in hospitals before the December 2012 death of his father, former New Mexico House Speaker Ben Lujan, who lost a battle with lung cancer. The health care horror stories the congressman heard from fellow patients and their families convinced him that Obamacare is a step in the right direction from the previous insurance system. ‘The environment was a very unfair one when it came to people getting the treatment they need,’ he said. ‘But if improvements need to be made to make it work better, we need to do that.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 1/14/14]

Luján Backed Delaying Enrollment Deadline For ACA In Wake Of Website Problems. Few House Democrats have voiced support for a delay, but on Thursday Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., told the Journal he was open to the idea. ‘The problems facing HealthCare.gov are disappointing and unacceptable,’ Lujan said. ‘The administration is working around the clock to fix them; however, if adjusting any deadlines will better achieve the overall goals of providing affordable, quality health care to the people of New Mexico, the Congress should certainly be open to doing so.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 11/1/13]

Luján Backed Switch To State-Based Exchanges For Congressional Health Insurance, Supported Continued Federal Premium Payments. “Members of Congress and their staffs can rest easier during the August recess after the Obama administration last week agreed to fix a glitch in the Affordable Care Act that could have cost them thousands extra for health insurance each year. . . . Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Rep. Ben Ray Luján, both New Mexico Democrats, supported the switch to state-based exchanges for congressional health insurance. . . . ‘Members of Congress and their staff are subject to the law just like everyone else, and we should look for solutions that meet this principle,’ Luján said. When I pressed them on the federal premium assistance question, staffers for Luján, Lujan Grisham and Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., said their bosses supported continued federal premium payments.” [Legal Monitor Worldwide, 8/6/13]

Luján Denounced Cornhusker Kickback In Senate Version Of Healthcare Reform Bill. “Heinrich and Lujan both cited a giveaway to Sen. Ben Nelson, a Democrat from Nebraska, that would force the federal government to pay for new Medicaid enrollees in Nebraska as especially odious. Heinrich said the provision ‘stinks.’ Lujan essentially agreed. ‘I don't support what they did in there with Sen. Nelson, specifically, where people across the country are having to provide additional support for one state,’ Lujan said. ‘What they did for Sen. Nelson doesn't help New Mexico.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 1/20/10]

Luján Expressed Skepticism Regarding Proposal To Tax Cadillac Health Plans. “Mark Nicastre, a spokesman for Rep. Ben Ray Luján, said Luján would rather generate savings from Medicare and Medicaid overhauls ‘and offsets coming from those in the very top income brackets who have benefited the most from the Bush tax cuts.’ ‘Rep. Luján is encouraged that the threshold has been raised, but he wants to see a more comprehensive analysis of those affected by the changes in the legislation,’ Lujan said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 1/16/10]

Farmington Daily Times Editor: Luján’s One-On-One Constituent Meetings At Expense Of Town Halls Had The “Appearance Of Cowardice.” “The area Luján represents is gargantuan. Still, he is my representative in Congress, so when I learned he'd be having five-minute one-on-one meetings with constituents, I decided to go and talk with him. . . . I don't blame Luján for trying to avoid the fiasco that town hall meetings have become for

lawmakers as of late, but there must be an easier way. Five-minute one-on-ones is an inelegant system, and if the time length isn't enforced, it looks like you're favoring some people over others. Whether it was the intent or not, this system has the appearance of cowardice. And as a politician, Luján shouldn't need a lecture from me on the importance of appearance.” [Patrick Hogan, Farmington Daily Times, 8/27/09]

Luján Suggested He Would Support Surtax On Wealthy Americans, Small Business Owners To Pay For Public Option. “A House bill that would levy new taxes on wealthy Americans - and some small-business owners - drew skepticism from most of New Mexico's all-Democrat congressional delegation last week, though some members said the proposal is worth considering. . . . The House bill also would require employers with payrolls larger than \$250,000 annually to provide insurance to employees or pay the government a penalty of 8 percent of payroll. . . . Rep. Ben Ray Luján of Santa Fe agreed that cost savings should be a priority, but he said the surtax proposal is not necessarily a bad one. ‘This surcharge associated with reforming health care would only apply to those that are earning the highest 1 or 1.2 percent,’ he said. ‘I'm sure there would be some households (in New Mexico) that would be affected, but they are also households that benefited from the Bush tax cuts ...’” [Albuquerque Journal, 7/19/09]

Affordable Care Act – Public Option

Luján Was “Strong Supporter” Of Public Option. “While this bill is not perfect, the cost of doing nothing would have been far too high. Like many of you, I am a strong supporter of a public option. I advocated for the public option and supported it when it passed the House. I continued to advocate for its inclusion when discussion of the Senate legislation began. But the road to a great health insurance system can start with the road to a better health insurance system. That is what this legislation does.” [Luján, Taos News, 3/25/10]

Headline: Press Release: “Lujan: We Must Demand a Public Option.” [Luján press release, 10/23/09]

Luján Signed Letter Vowing To Vote Against Any Healthcare Reform Bill Without A Public Option. “Luján did note that his name was among those of 50 congressmen included on a "whip" list - a list of private pledges made by members of Congress before a vote on the issue in July - that was attached to a letter vowing to vote against any bill that does not include a ‘robust public option.’ ‘As I've talked to more people, as I've listened and studied this issue, it's clear it's critical that we have a mechanism in there that keeps costs down,’ Luján said. ‘That mechanism is the public option.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 9/5/09]

Housing Issues

Significant Findings

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Immigration and Border Issues

Significant Findings

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Comprehensive Reform

Luján Pushed Comprehensive Immigration Reform, Said Border Security Was Important But Illegal Crossings Had Dropped Dramatically In Recent Years. “Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., said those who would oppose comprehensive immigration reform simply because a bill doesn't aggressively target border enforcement are misguided. He said border security ‘should be a part of the conversation’ but pointed out that illegal border crossings have decreased dramatically over the past five years. Luján also said the immigration bill offers a chance to issue more H1-B visas to highly skilled immigrants who show entrepreneurial and job-creating potential. ‘As we look at the tech industry -- including Intel here in New Mexico -- we realize how important strengthening an H1-B visa program is,’ Luján said. ‘We want to make it a very vibrant environment associated with the tech industry.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 4/9/13]

Deportation – DACA/DAPA

Luján Encouraged Obama To Take Executive Action On Deferred Deportation Policy. “On Thursday, Luján attended a Capitol Hill press conference with about two-dozen other Democrats to drum up support for Obama's plan. Afterward, he told the Journal that if the Republican-led House won't pass immigration legislation already approved by the Senate then Obama should take unilateral action. ‘We are collectively asking and encouraging President Obama to be bold and use the full extent of his executive authority to do what's right for millions of immigrants here in the United States,’ Luján said. ‘We were very clear that families can no longer wait for House Republicans to act.’ Luján stressed that U.S. presidents have long used their executive powers to change immigration policy, so Obama would not be the first.” [Albuquerque Journal, 11/16/14]

REAL ID

Luján Urged DHS To Work With State Of New Mexico On Implementation Given State's Encouragement To Undocumented Immigrants To Apply For Driver's Licenses. In a January 2013 letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, Luján wrote, “According to the Insurance Research Council, over a quarter of New Mexico drivers lack insurance-the second highest rate in the nation. To partially address this problem, the state has sought to encourage all of its drivers, including non-citizens and undocumented immigrants, to attain a driver's license in order to then obtain auto insurance. A number of other states, including Utah and Illinois, are currently working with your Department to ensure that their residents are able to obtain either a drivers license or a REAL ID-compliant identification card according to their personal needs. According to the Insurance Research Council, over a quarter of New Mexico drivers lack insurance-the second highest rate in the nation. To partially address this problem, the state has sought to encourage all of its drivers, including non-citizens and undocumented immigrants, to attain a driver's license in order to then obtain auto insurance. A number of other states, including Utah and Illinois, are currently working with your Department to ensure that their residents are able to obtain either a drivers license or a REAL ID-compliant identification card according to their personal needs.” [Luján press release, 1/16/13]

Labor & Working Family Issues

Significant Findings

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Minimum Wage

Luján “Open” To Minimum Wage Increase – “I Don’t Have A Specific Position On The Dollar Amount Right Now.” “New Mexico's congressional delegation gave mostly strong reviews of President Obama's State of the Union speech Tuesday night, and Democrats were receptive to his proposal to raise the federal minimum wage. . . . He also said he's ‘open’ to raising the minimum wage. ‘We'll take a close look at what the president put on the table,’ Lujan said. ‘I don't have a specific position on the dollar amount right now...but I'm sure it wasn't an arbitrary number from the president. I just want to look at some of the details behind it.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 2/13/13]

LGBT Issues

Significant Findings

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Marriage Equality

Luján Applauded New Mexico Supreme Court Ruling On Marriage Equality, Called It “Matter Of Civil Rights.” “The New Mexico Supreme Court ruling legalizing same-gender marriage prompted reactions across the United States. U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich and U.S. Reps. Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan Grisham issued a joint statement applauding the ruling. . . . ‘Today’s decision by the New Mexico Supreme Court ensures that every couple can make the personal choice of marriage,’ said Luján. ‘Marriage equality is a matter of civil rights and treating all people who are in loving and committed relationships fairly. Gay and lesbian couples make the same contributions and sacrifices that we all do, including paying taxes, owning business and caring for their families. Now everyone will be treated equally under the law.’” [Los Alamos Monitor, 12/21/13]

Obama Administration

Significant Findings

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Appointments

Luján “Declined To Take A Position” On Nomination Of Hagel As Defense Secretary. “When Chuck Hagel appears before the Senate Armed Services Committee today for a hearing on his nomination as U.S. defense secretary, all five members of New Mexico's congressional delegation will have one common question on their minds: What will Hagel do to protect Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories? . . . Rep. Ben Ray Luján D-N.M., declined to take a position on Hagel's nomination. . . . Rep. Ben Ray Luján declined to say whether he would support or oppose Hagel's nomination, saying that is a decision for Udall and Heinrich to make on behalf of the state. He said the labs' work in nuclear nonproliferation will remain an important national priority even as the U.S. moves to meet its obligation under the New START treaty and beyond.” [Albuquerque Journal, 1/31/13]

Tax Issues

Significant Findings

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Estate Tax

Luján Pledged To Support Measures To Ease Estate Taxes. “He also pledged his support in easing estate taxes that Pesco officials said can force businesses like theirs to sell rather than remain in the family. ‘I agree, and count on me to support that,’ Luján said. Pesco was founded in 1970 by Edwin Rhodes after his job as district manager at Black, Sivalls and Bryson dried up. His family continues to carry on the business and occupies most key positions in the company.” [Farmington Daily Times, 4/19/11]

PILT

Luján Supported Long-Term PILT Funding. “Lujan said he advocates for long-term funding of a federal program that provides San Juan County approximately \$2.2 million a year. The program, known as the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program, compensates counties nationally though largely those in Western states for the federal land within their borders that cannot be developed or included in property tax collections. . . . Lujan said he signed a letter with many of his colleagues supporting long-term PILT funding. "The ultimate goal is to get multi-year funding," he said.” [Farmington Daily Times, 3/31/15]

Technology Issues

Significant Findings



Net Neutrality

Luján Cosponsored Net Neutrality Bill. “Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-03) is cosponsoring a House bill to prevent broadband providers from blocking or discriminating against content online. The New Mexican Democrat is one of several representatives on the Energy and Commerce Committee backing H.R. 3982, the Open Internet Preservation Act. A companion bill is being drafted in the Senate and has the backing of Sen. Tom Udall. ‘A free and open Internet has spawned countless innovations that have impacted our lives for the better and spurred economic growth,’ Luján said in a statement. ‘It is essential that we keep the innovative spirit alive by ensuring that we have a system that does not block access to content on the Web.’” [Albuquerque Business First, 2/5/14]

SOPA/PIPA

Luján Cosponsored SOPA Legislation. “New Mexico Democratic US Rep. Ben Ray Lujan and Sen. Tom Udall respectively cosponsored the House and Senate versions of the bill in October and November. Both bills would increase the authority of the US Department of Justice and copyright holders to file court orders against websites suspected of illegally sharing copyrighted files. Under the Houses Stop Online Piracy Act, for example, the DOJ can order payment providers like PayPal to shut down pay accounts on foreign websites suspected of offering things like illicit movie downloads. . . . Lujan, who says online piracy ‘stifles innovation,’ adds that the danger of ‘rogue websites’ goes beyond pirating. He’s cosponsoring SOPA partly because it cracks down on websites that sell ‘counterfeit and contaminated’ medicine to seniors, he writes in an email to SFR. Pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer support the legislation for this reason.” [Santa Fe Reporter, 1/4/12-1/10/12]

Telecommunications

Luján Voted Against Bill To Allow Consumers To Unlock Their Cell Phones. “The bill was passed with a 295-114 vote. The legislation is known as the ‘Unlocking Consumer Choice and Wireless Competition Act’. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-03) was among those voting against the bill. Luján, in a statement, said he made his decision because he believes the act was changed at the last minute in a way that weakens consumers’ ownership rights. ‘While this is a complex issue, what is at stake is straightforward,’ he said. ‘This is not just about the ability to unlock a phone and choose your mobile network, it is about the use of copyright laws to limit the freedom and choices of consumers. Instead of clarifying a questionable legal interpretation that prevents consumers from using their electronic devices for legal purposes, this bill legitimates that decision and allows anti-competitive practices to become legally enforceable. Many would agree that consumers should be able to unlock their phone or use electronic devices for legal purposes without running afoul of copyright law. Unfortunately this bill does not provide the straightforward solution that it did before the bill was changed.’ Luján pointed out that consumer groups Public Knowledge and the Electronic Frontier Foundation had also withdrawn their support for the legislation.” [Albuquerque Business First, 2/26/14]

Trade Issues

Significant Findings



South Korea, Colombia & Panama Trade Deals

Luján Opposed South Korea, Colombia & Panama Trade Deals, Cited Concerns With Loss Of Manufacturing Jobs, Intellectual Property Protections. “Reps. Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan, both Democrats, opposed all three deals. . . . Lujan said he had ‘serious concerns’ that all three deals would cut manufacturing jobs and make it easier for corporations to move their headquarters or major factories overseas to take advantage of cheaper labor and tax loopholes. Lujan also said the deals offered few intellectual property protections, a potential problem for many innovative businesses in New Mexico. ‘Innovators and entrepreneurs need to know that their intellectual property will be protected and these agreements do not go far enough,’ he said.” [Albuquerque Journal, 10/16/11]

Trade Promotion Authority & Trans-Pacific Partnership

Albuquerque Journal Editorial Slammed Luján, Delegation Democrats For Opposing TPA & TPP. “Imagine what the export totals could be if the tariffs and red tape were cut. So why would the Democrats in the state's congressional delegation be so vehemently opposed to leveling the playing field for their constituents? . . . New Mexico's senators missed an opportunity Tuesday to tilt things in the favor of New Mexico and the nation. Constituents can only hope the opportunity presents itself again, because isolationism doesn't work. As the Trade Representative Office says, ‘the question isn't should we trade; it's how. . . . There is a cost to doing nothing.’ And New Mexicans and Americans shouldn't have to pay that price.” [Editorial, Albuquerque Journal, 5/13/15]

Veterans' Issues

Significant Findings



Appropriations

Luján Voted Against MilCon-VA Appropriations Bill, Cited VFW Criticism Of Bill. ““The VFW has called this 'a bad bill for veterans' and I agree. The Republican spending bill does not provide the necessary resources to fully address the challenges facing the VA and fails to honor the commitment made to our veterans. VA Secretary McDonald has said that cuts in this bill are the equivalent of 70,000 fewer veterans receiving VA medical care,' Congressman Luján said.” [Luján press release, 5/5/15]

COLA

Luján Voted Against Legislation That Restored Military Retiree COLA Cut While Cutting Medicare. “Congressman Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico's Third District voted yesterday against a House Republican proposal that undermines Medicare and pits seniors against military retirees. The legislation addresses a provision in the budget agreement that was passed by Congress in December that reduced the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to pensions for military retirees - but it does so by extending sequester cuts to Medicare. ‘I support action to restore the full cost of living adjustment for military retirees who have spent a career serving their country, but it's disappointing that House Republicans offered a bill that cut Medicare to pay for it,’ Congressman Lujan said. ‘We need a solution that does not pick winners and losers between military retirees and our nation's seniors.’” [Luján press release, 2/12/14]

VA Delays & Scandal

Luján Called For Shinseki's Resignation. “In calling for Shinseki to resign, Luján said in a statement that he believes ‘other VA officials or employees that are responsible for this despicable and disrespectful treatment of our veterans must step down as well.’” [Albuquerque Journal, 5/30/14]

Luján Joined With Delegation In Demanding Answers After Albuquerque VA Officials Failed To Provide Information On Management Policies & Practices. “New Mexico's congressional delegation is demanding answers from the Veterans Administration after Albuquerque VA officials told congressional staffers this week that they must submit federal Freedom of Information Act requests to learn more about VA health care policies. All five delegation members - Democratic Sens. Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall, Democratic Reps. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Ben Ray Lujan, and Republican Rep. Steve Pearce - signed a letter to Sloan D. Gibson, the acting VA secretary on Thursday. The letter said the Albuquerque VA's insistence that members of Congress file official requests for information showed ‘an alarming ignorance or an utter disregard’ for congressional oversight.” [Albuquerque Journal, 7/10/14]