

Chairman Ben Ray Luján
AZ Democratic Party Heritage Dinner
Talking Stick Resort, Scottsdale, AZ
May 29, 2015

- Hi Everyone! Thank you for being here with me tonight.
- Special thanks to Councilwoman Kate Gallego for her introduction.
 - As the first woman to represent her district, she's brought passion and extensive knowledge while representing Downtown, East Phoenix, Laveen, and South Phoenix
- I also want to thank the Arizona Democratic Party for inviting me here and for hosting this event.
- The Arizona Democratic Party and the DCCC have had a strong partnership, and I look forward to keeping it going!
 - Thanks to both Chair Alexis Tameron and Vice-Chair Bill Roe for their hard work to strengthen the Party.
 - And thanks to each of you for the effort you make on behalf of Democrats.
- My colleague Ruben Gallego is also here tonight.
- Ruben has brought his Marine Corp tenacity to his work in the People's House.
- He has been firing on all cylinders this year, from his participation on the DCCC recruitment committee to his work standing up for DREAMers, and their patriotism and their devotion to this great country.
- I also want to acknowledge Raul Grijalva, and the passion and dedication he brings to Congress.
 - I thank him for the strong voice he's lent to our Caucus, as well as the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Progressive Caucus.
- And I want to acknowledge my friend Steve Israel.

- I am grateful for all the hard work Steve put in as Chairman of the DCCC, and continues to put in as Chair of the House Democratic Policy and Communications Committee.
- You will be hearing from him a little later on the message Democrats will have as we take our fight to the Republicans over the next year and a half
- It's great to be in Arizona, truly one of the most beautiful places in the country.
- As a Democrat in New Mexico, let me just say that you are my favorite neighboring state.
- But, more seriously, Arizona represents what will be at the center of the election in 2016, because Arizonans are the everyday Americans whose lives Democrats need to make better.
- Arizonans are the families who sit down at the kitchen table each night and try to figure out how to buy groceries, pay the bills and set a little money aside for their children's education.
- Arizonans are the married couple in their sixties that are wondering if, and when, they will be able to retire.
- Arizonans are the DREAMers who love this country and simply want to give back and live happy lives here.
- Arizonans are the young gay and lesbian adults Who want to love and marry like every other American.
- So as we travel across the state and the country in the coming year and a half, that must be our message.
- Democrats are on the side of everyday Americans and are helping to make their lives better and more secure. *
- If Democrats are fighting for everyday Americans, then there couldn't be a "Grand Canyon" for what Republicans are fighting for.
- Republicans want to make sure that those at the top get even more. They want to keep the deck stacked in favor of the special interests.*

- Republicans think that if a billionaire makes two billion dollars, that is good for America. I say if a hard working Arizonian can buy a home, save for their kids school, and retire that is GREAT for America.
- That is what motivates me every day and gets me fired up to get up and go to work.
- And I have to say, I came by it honestly. It is in my blood.
- My parents and grandparents taught me what hard work looks like.
- Back in New Mexico, my grandfather herded sheep. His greatest ambition was to have enough food on the table so when friends came by on a Sunday, he could set out an extra plate.
- My father wanted to go to college, but there was no money, so he started out as an ironworker, and he left my mother and brothers and sisters at home to go to Los Angeles and build ships.
- They taught me the importance of caring for our friends and neighbors, of looking out for one another, of being the strong voice for those whose voices aren't always heard.
- They taught me the strong work ethic and commitment you need to serve your community.
- They showed me how to roll up my sleeves and fight hard for what you believe in.
- To fight for what is right.
- Some of the details might be different, but I am sure that stories sounds familiar to many of you.
- However, we know that hoping and wishing, and maybe even complaining a little, won't make folks lives better.
- We need to win elections. We need more Democrats in office.
- We need more voices saying enough of the give aways to giant corporations!
- More voices saying "yes" to investing in America!

- More voices saying “Damn right our kids deserve the best education possible”
- More voices saying “An honest days work should mean an honest days pay”
- More voices to say no matter what color your skin, how old you are who you love, where you were born, you are the heart and soul of this great country!
- So, you are asking: how do we do it? How do we find more of these voices?
- First, we need to recruit, train and equip folks who have the fire in the belly to make our country a better place. Whether it is a candidate, a staffer, or a volunteer, we need them to fight like Wildcats or Sun Devils or even Lumberjacks to keep our country moving forward.
 - And there are no finer people, no scrappier fighters, no tougher operators than right here in Arizona.
 - And that is a good thing because as I said Arizona is a cornerstone to our strategy for winning more seats.
- We are going to have a tough as nails race for Ann Kirkpatrick’s seat, a competitive fight to take back the seat that was once held by two of the finest people I know: Gabby Giffords and Ron Barber, and we will make sure Kyrsten Sinema has every resource possible to keep winning big.
- We are going to need to reach out to every possible voter, especially people of color, young people, women and all the blue collar folks who shower after work not before it.
- When they turn out and vote, Democrats win. At the DCCC, we continue to invest early in field and voter turnout programs, and make sure they get to the polls.
 - We will harness their energy and excitement.
 - They will tell our story of ambition, hard work, and the kind of success that can be shared by everyone.
- And Republicans know this.
- In fact they are so nervous, they are trying to beat us in the courts since they are scared that they can’t beat us in the tough races coming up.
- Arizona’s 1st district remains a critical part of the DCCC’s plans.

- We wish Ann Kirkpatrick the best of luck in her run for Arizona’s Senate seat. She has proven time and again how to win this district, and we will take those lessons to heart in 2016.
- The DCCC will find the right candidate that resonates here, and we will hold this seat.
- One key to that success in the Arizona’s 1st district is reaching out to the strong Native American community.
 - As a Congressman from New Mexico, I couldn’t agree more about how important it is to reach out to the Tribal community and the Navajo Nation, which is why as Chairman of the DCCC and I have placed a renewed emphasis on our Tribal Engagement and Active Members (TEAM) program.
- This program takes the best of what the DCCC already does and tailors and amplifies it for the Tribal community, and some important components include:
 - A robust fundraising push
 - Expanded field outreach
 - And specialized political components to ensure the Tribal community’s priorities are top-of-mind
- And it was our record breaking fundraising efforts of TEAM, along with our great partnership with your state party, that put us on top in this district last cycle.
 - An effort of over \$1 million.
- Arizona’s 2nd district is also critical to the DCCC’s plans.
 - AZ-02 was the closest race in the country last cycle.
 - Ron Barber lost by only 167 votes in the tough wave of 2014
- Republican Martha McSally is untested and unproven, in a Democratic leaning district.
 - She is one of our One-Term Wonders, a vulnerable, freshman Republican with no track record who happened to ride the wave of 2014
 - And will be riding the wave out in 2016.

- We recently turned up the heat on her, holding her accountable for her vote against predatory lending protections for our troops.
- We will continue to dig in and make her feel the pressure.
- These are the sort of aggressive, early investments that the DCCC is making around the country.
- And while we are laser focused on the two races I mentioned, we are not taking anything for granted. We need everyone in this fight. We need Arizona Democrats.
- Democrats like Kyrsten Sinema. If you know her, you'll agree: elections are the only time she runs harder than in her triathlons.
- Kyrsten is a great friend, a great mentor to a lot of our newer members, and there is no doubt about her commitment to her constituents.
- She has been a tireless voice for the people of Chandler, Mesa, and Tempe.
- She has been a valuable Member of the Financial Services Committee, which recently advanced her legislation to improve SEC regulations and provide more certainty to Arizona businesses and families.
- We also need Democrats like Raul and Ruben
- As the campaign season goes forward, we will protect our colleagues, and we will hold Republicans accountable.
- We will continue to push One-Term Wonders into a corner.
- Our message will be district driven, with a goal of getting local coverage – coverage that is tailored and resonates with voters.
- We will take advantage of what's in our control. Everyone is already expecting us to win more seats, but it is our goal to not just win, but win... big.
- We're not just satisfied with starting the race strong. We intend to finish it even stronger.
- Look, I could stand up here all day and lay out our strategic blueprint.

- I could tell you about the 26 seats that Republicans currently hold in Democratic districts.
- I could tell you about how in 2012, voting was more than 18% higher than in 2010.
- I could tell you about how we are revolutionizing how we use data and analytics in House campaigns.
- I could tell you about how we need to recruit candidates who fit their district, and know how to run for Congress.
- I could also tell you about what a Republican Congress with a Republican President would do to our nation.
- I could tell you about their reckless and irresponsible policies.
- I could tell you how Roosevelt had to clean up after Hoover.
- How Kennedy had to clean up from Eisenhower.
- How Clinton had to clean up from Reagan and Bush.
- And how President Obama is still cleaning up from the other Bush!
- But I want to close by telling you why I am here and why I know you are here.
- It might sound a little repetitive but that is because it is so close to my heart.
- I am here because the guy driving truck for 16 hours a day deserves just a little break.
- I am here because our kids and grandkids should be able to look at the same gorgeous mountains and rivers we see today.
- I am here because no senior should say: should I buy my medicine or buy food?
- I am here because my father taught me his version of the Golden Rule: work hard, love your family, take care of your friends, and leave the world just a little bit better than you found it.
- But I can't do it alone. We can't do it alone.

- We need your support to deepen our Democratic bench, protect our incumbents, and fight for our candidates.
- We need your support to connect with everyday Americans living here in Arizona and across the country.
- We need your support to help everyone achieve their dreams:
 - Their dreams of going to college
 - Their dreams of opening a small business
 - Or their dream of becoming an American.

- So let me ask you, are you with me?
- I didn't hear you, are you with me?
- And will you be with me till Election Day?
- Then let's get going!
- Thank you!

[end speaking program]