

**Speech Accepting Nomination as Chairman
State Central Committee of Democratic Party of New Mexico
September 12, 2009
Javier Gonzales**

I would like to thank Victor Raigoza and Lt. Governor Diane Denish for nominating me. A special note of thanks to Vice-Chair Anadelle Sanchez for serving as interim Chair the past few months and for her commitment to the New Mexico Democratic Party over the years. I would also like to thank former Chairman Brian Colon, Aleili and Rafael for their sacrifices the past two and a half years. You have built a stronger Party and led it through one of its greatest recent victories in November. Again, thank you for your leadership and service.

Finally, I want to thank all of you here today for standing in support of me for a job that I am ready to tackle, at a time where political courage and a moral compass are required. I won't let you down.

36 years ago, as a young boy, I stood with an individual at a Democratic rally in Las Vegas, New Mexico. At the time, he was running for Congress and professed to the crowd his fundamental beliefs for a brighter future. I admired his passion for an America whose character demanded of her citizenry a commitment to human rights, the pursuit of justice, and equal opportunities for all her citizens. He raised me to believe that outside our family, my single greatest responsibility was to help those in need and fight for those without voices. For all of my life, I have believed what my father said 36 years ago as an absolute truth, out of service to our fellow neighbor, we become better individuals, and in becoming better individuals, we live up to America's brightest promise...the freedom to pursue happiness and enjoy the liberties so many Americans fought and died for. It is in the name of my father George Gonzales, and his belief in a brighter future, that I stand before you seeking the privilege to become Chairman of the people's party, the Democratic party of the Great State of New Mexico.

In this day, a day where we see attacks against our President, and our very own best and brightest federal and state leaders, we must renew our commitment to fight for our Democratic principles and ideals. Principles driven by our progressive agenda to bring opportunity, fairness, tolerance, and respect for others. Ideals rooted in our history as a

party, our belief in the ideal for which America began – that all people are created equal. And when we Democrats say “all”, we mean “all”. Now the party of Bush, The Republican Party, believes in exploiting the politics of fear and division. They want to go back to the days when energy lobbyists had unfettered access to Dick Cheney, record deficits were being amassed on the backs of our children, and health industry bureaucrats were making life and death decisions.... all for the sake of driving profit.

As Democrats, we fought and elected Martin Heinrich, Harry Teague, Ben Ray Lujan and Tom Udall so that they could join Jeff Bingaman in Washington, and now New Mexicans can feel assured that our Congressional delegation is fighting to shape our future.... not fear it.

When we speak of our future, many of us have to go no further than our own families to draw inspiration. The two happiest moments of my life occurred on the days that my two daughters Cameron and Cadence were born. I’ll always treasure those first few moments of their lives when I held them in my arms.

As a new parent, staring into their beautiful brown eyes, I understood the awesome responsibility that I had to these precious little girls. Since those early moments, I have constantly thought of how I could provide a safe and healthy life filled with opportunity and love. I worry about their future. Today they are growing up in a world that often seems like it’s working against them rather than for them.

Now, I am a product of public education. I benefited from an educational system where teachers were valued and a child’s education never suffered the consequences of political calculation. When the Republicans controlled the White House and the Congress, we saw policies enacted that set-up our public schools to fail. They promoted alternatives to public schools using the same old fear tactics. They passed No Child Left Behind, gutted the funding, and ironically left millions of children not only behind but also at greater risk for failure. They said choice would promote better education. Instead, they were willing to create two different school systems—one for the rich and one for the poor. They wanted to leave behind millions of kids, mostly poor, across this country in educational systems under-funded and doomed to fail.

While Republicans were making a mess of our educational system at the national level, it was a different story under Democratic leadership here in our Great State of New Mexico. Governor Richardson and Lt. Gov. Denish, with the help of our Democratic controlled legislature, fought for Constitutional changes that allowed for greater investments in public education. Under Governor Richardson and Lt. Gov. Denish, we have seen investments in early childhood development, pre-k, all-day kindergarten, and a commitment to reduce drop-out rates. Yet today, in our state, with Democratic control of the legislature, there is a risk that investment in education is going to be reduced...or cut. Investments that we know will prepare our kids for a brighter tomorrow, a better opportunity to achieve their educational potential and a fighting chance to compete in a global economy. As Democrats, we must stand united behind Gov. Richardson and Lt. Gov. Denish and ask that our Democratic elected officials in the legislature do what we know is right for our children and fight any efforts to reduce spending on education. Now is not the time to reduce investments in education. Our children's future is at stake and we cannot let them down.

Cameron and Cadence are growing up in a different world than you and I did. There is hope, that over time, changes under the law that provide equal opportunity for women, are fully realized in a society that has made great strides to do the same for men. Just recently, President Obama nominated and the United States Senate confirmed Judge Sonia Sotomayor to become the United States Supreme Court 111th Justice, its first Hispanic, and its third female justice. Yet we still live in a country where 31 Republicans, all but one, white male, voted against Justice Sotomayor. The Republican leader claimed despite being Ivy League educated, serving as a federal judge for over 17 years, and a prosecutor, she "had the inability to refrain from bringing her personal political opinions to bear on her rulings". This from a party that brought us Clarence Thomas and Anton Scalia! And despite the historical achievement of appointing a Hispanic female to the highest court in the land there is still much work that needs to be done.

While woman have made great advancements in the workforce, they haven't achieved pay equity. This year, Congressional Democrats passed and President Obama signed the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. An act that amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and assures that victims of pay discrimination can effectively challenge unequal pay. The Republicans in 2008 defeated that same bill citing the possibility of frivolous lawsuits.

While they had control of the Senate, they never wanted to seek a compromise. If you don't think one election can make a difference...think again.

Without the dogged determination of impassioned advocates who cared about this and so many other important issues, change wouldn't have come to this country last November. Every father hopes and prays for the day when his daughter meets the love of her life. As Democrats, we fight for the day, when the right to marry the person of one's choice is a fundamental right, regardless of sexual orientation. Denying American's this right is the kind of discrimination that has no place in our laws, especially in New Mexico. We know, to achieve America's bright promise, equality for all cannot be achieved if equality for some is denied, and discrimination anywhere makes it that much easier for discrimination to flourish everywhere.

The fundamental rights outlined by our founding fathers created a thriving democracy. But, there are troubling signs that we have lost our way. We have to look no further than the current debate on health care reform to realize that our fight didn't end this past November, but has just begun in order to ensure that every American have access to health care—not just a percentage, not just a certain age demographic, not just a region—but every American must have access to quality health care.

Our President gave a brilliant speech on Wednesday night and was right again in what he said this morning. He said, no one should have to worry that they'll go without health insurance – not for one year, not for one month, not for one day. When he signs his health reform plan into law – they won't.

There are those that are challenging our Democratic members of Congress, those who believe in the status quo. They believe in inaction. They believe that an insurance industry bureaucrat, in the name of free markets, is in a better position to make decisions on our health care than our own physicians. They want the status quo to stay in place so that insurance industry executives have the power to decide whether in this great country we'll EVEN HAVE access to insurance...and if out the kindness of there heart they decide to let us have access to insurance, there will be a cap on how much we can spend on our care.

Thanks but NO Thanks. Senator Ted Kennedy fought the fight for over forty years to ensure complete coverage of every American and the battle isn't over. Although Senator Kennedy isn't here to fight alongside with us, we have a responsibility to Senator Kennedy and our nation to pick-up the baton and finish the race. The time is now for Democrats to support the efforts of our congressional delegation to bring true health care reform NOW. We need to let them know that if they fight OUR fight in Washington we will fight THEIR fight here at home. We will not let them lose their congressional seat to health industry funded Republicans. And YES, health reform DOES require a PUBLIC OPTION.

But standing our ground on the public option will take political will and may I dare say—political courage. No cause worth fighting comes easy. My mom, Celine Gonzales, has and will always be the backbone of our family. She doesn't have the gift of gab like my dad, but when she says speaks, she speaks with great wisdom and truth. When I first was elected to public office her words were simple. The people of Santa Fe County have given you THEIR trust...don't screw up! In all seriousness, she said with that trust comes a great responsibility. A responsibility to perform and to shape the future. A responsibility to help those who need help. A responsibility to fight and have courage to make tough decisions...even when there are political consequences. It's a responsibility that we as Democrats have today. We have a responsibility to be courageous and finally address the inequities that have been driven by partisan politics.

Yes, we can bring change with Democratic control from the White House to our State legislature. We have a responsibility to address the Urgency of Now.

To bring change that renews America's bright promise...the freedom to pursue happiness and the promise of liberty and equality for ALL of our people.

We are going to do this because we have history on our side. WE are the party of Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, Clinton and Obama!

We are the party of the great Governors , King, Anaya, and Richardson and WE will be the party of Diane Denish!

And I would submit that with our elected Democrats we have the future in our grasp. There is no doubt in my mind that Jeff Bingaman, Tom Udall, Martin Heinrich, Harry Teague and Ben Ray Lujan will shape our political landscape for a better future.

And while our all-star team in Washington fights for us at the national level, we have dedicated Democrats at the local level here in New Mexico fighting for a brighter tomorrow

I commit to you today, as your Party Chair, that I will fight for you and the principles and ideals of our Democratic Party. You believe what I believe, we are right on all the issues and when we have Democrats in office, the people of this nation and this state have people fighting for them and against the status quo.

We are a Party of progress and not stifled. We are the party of labor, education, environment, civil rights and working families.

So will you join me in the fight to keep hope alive by keeping Democrats in elected office?

Will you join me in fighting to re-elect Martin Heinrich, Harry Teague and Ben Ray Lujan to the United States Congress?

Will you join me in fighting for the expansion of our Democratic controlled legislature?

Will you join me in shattering that glass ceiling by electing Diane Denish the first woman Governor of the State of New Mexico?

Thank you New Mexico. The fight begins now!