



## PRIORITIES

When I get to Denver, these are the issues and committees I want to be a part of to help create measurable solutions that will positively impact everyone in HD58.

### Water and Climate

The western slope and southwest U.S. are facing something much worse than drought or even a super drought. The aridification of the Southwest means the western slope is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  degrees warmer than 100 years ago. This amounts to 20% less moisture falling on the western slope. It is going to continue to get warmer. Any conversation that involves water management and conservation must have climate change in that conversation.

We will not solve the new reality of an overdrawn Colorado River without all water sectors – agricultural, industrial, municipal, and recreational – making sacrifices. The future of our water will depend on collaboration, innovation, education, and incentives for all seven states of the Colorado river basin and all water sectors. What will not work is politicizing water, finger-pointing, and gaslighting; **we need solutions.**

I will work tirelessly to bring 21st-century water conservation and management solutions to HD58 and Colorado.

### Public Education

Well, it has happened. Since 1992 when TABOR was voted into the Colorado constitution, funding for public education has been falling every year since. Colorado is now ranked 50th in average pay to public school teachers. We just dropped below Mississippi and Oklahoma. We need a new tax policy in Colorado that is not irrational and illogical.

With my business background, I can appreciate a balanced budget, or “budget stabilization” (BS), as it is called in the Colorado Constitution. Unfortunately, the BS factor in Colorado has come at the expense of public education. In 2021, \$572 million was taken from public education to balance the budget. Since 2008, \$10 billion has been taken away from public education. This is unacceptable. As Coloradans, we deserve better for our children. I will work tirelessly to collaborate with the budget committee, managing our \$36 billion annual budget while leaving public education out of future cuts.

### Mental Health and Teen Suicide

A recent report by a western slope law enforcement agency stated that 60-80% of returning inmates are on (or should be on) antipsychotic drugs. Instead of burdening law enforcement, we need more mental health professionals to help these folks get the services they need to be productive citizens. We need more funding for co-responder programs, where both law enforcement and mental health professionals show up at the scene of a situation involving domestic violence, suicide, or substance abuse. These situations can be defused by co-responding teamwork and getting that individual to a place (other than jail) where they can get the help they need. The City of Montrose Police Department and the Gunnison County Sheriff's Office are already implementing effective co-responder programs.

On the western slope, we continue to see teen suicide rates climb every year. Our children today are experiencing teen PTSD (anxiety and depression) brought on by social media bullying, teen domestic violence affecting 1 out of 10 teens, two years of COVID, and no apparent end to school shootings. I will fight for more funding for organizations like Peer Kindness, Axis Health System, and CASA, and find ways to expand collaboration between like-minded organizations focused on teen suicide and bullying.

## Affordable Workforce Housing

In 2014, the average home on the western slope cost \$175,000; eight years later, the average is now \$415,000. Our housing market is so inflated that most working families can't begin to afford a home. In meetings with leadership in San Miguel, Montrose, and Gunnison counties, the main cause of a shortage of affordable workforce housing (AWFH) is wealthy out-of-state investors buying houses and turning them into overpriced rentals. The market is so inflated that the people we need most in our communities — first responders, teachers, nurses, mental health professionals, and service industry folks — can't afford to live here.

I believe that the future of affordable housing is in giving incentives to companies and builders who will accelerate the construction of manufactured tiny homes, tiny apartments, and 1 to 3-bedroom homes. In San Miguel County, outside Norwood, construction has begun on 27 affordable 1 to 3-bedroom manufactured homes for teachers and first responders who work in Telluride but can't afford to live there. These home buyers will get high-efficiency appliances and financial assistance for solar roof units to help reduce their utility bills. This is just one example of an innovative idea for affordable housing. I will work tirelessly to bring more (AWFH) innovative ideas to HD58.

## Standing Up for Women's Rights

On June 24, 2022, six conservative Supreme Court Justices voted for the first time in history to remove a human right from the Constitution. The impulsive decision to overturn *Roe vs. Wade* appears to be motivated by political ideologies and religious doctrine — neither of which belong in the halls of the Supreme Court. Once our government starts deciding which fundamental freedoms and rights for Americans are more important than others, we all lose our freedom.

HD 58 deserves a representative that will protect these rights for all women – left, right, or center:

- ★ to choose what they do with their bodies and their lives;
- ★ to be paid equal pay for equal work;
- ★ to be free from sexual harassment and sexual violence;
- ★ to be safe from domestic abuse;
- ★ to have full and equal educational and career opportunities.

## Protecting Our Foundational Freedoms

I will defend all human and civil rights, support LGBTQ+ citizens, and ensure that immigrants are treated fairly in Colorado.

I will fight to solidify DACA and all the rights and freedoms of our invaluable Latinx community.

I will work hard to protect our elections from outside influence.

I will strive to increase incentives that bring more clean, renewable affordable energy options to Colorado homes and businesses, and the high-paying jobs associated with clean energy.

I will seek to expand common-sense gun legislation in Colorado, including a 21-day waiting period to allow for more thorough background checks, age restrictions on certain gun purchases, and closing loopholes for guns purchased at shows and online.

I will work hard to bring more affordable options to rural health care and daycare on the western slope.

I believe that the scope of leadership and organizational experience I've gathered in my life has brought me to where I am now. I respectfully ask for your vote on Tuesday, November 8th, to represent District 58 in the Colorado State House of Representatives.