

SENATOR TOM UDALL: IMPROVING HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

Tom has consistently worked to expand access to quality affordable health care and education for all New Mexicans.

Tom has worked tirelessly in Congress to make quality, affordable health care and education a reality for all New Mexicans, and to take on the health and education disparities facing the nation. Tom has introduced and fought for legislation to expand equity and access to health care and education to meet the needs of New Mexico's diverse population.



FIGHTING TO EXPAND HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS

As a member of the **Senate Appropriations Committee** Tom has fought to increase funding for domestic and international health initiatives to improve public health, and to make health care affordable and accessible for all.

Throughout his career he has fought for efforts in Congress to ensure that all Americans have access to health care. He is a longtime supporter of legislation to ensure universal coverage, and believes health care is a right – not a privilege. He has worked to address health disparities in New Mexico and beyond, specifically in rural, minority, and traditionally underserved populations. And he has been a champion of improving health outcomes for children.

"We must renew our commitment to building healthier communities, not just with words, but by investing in the professionals, infrastructure, and public health programs that protect us and create a better future."

-U.S. Senator Tom Udall



Tom's track record of fighting to achieve health equity across New Mexico includes:

- Leading the fight to **expand access to telehealth and telemedicine**. An early supporter of the University of New Mexico's Project ECHO telehealth training program and secured a \$1 million grant in the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations bill to aid pregnant women and their OBGYN providers in rural communities through the purchase of telemedicine equipment.
- Introducing the bipartisan Care Corps Demonstration Act, legislation to **establish a national volunteer force to provide non-medical caregiving services to the elderly and those with disabilities**, and secured \$5 million in appropriations for this initiative;
- Securing critical resources for Community Health Centers and for grant programs such as the Community Mental Health Block Grant to ensure that mental health and behavioral health received the same parity as physical health.
- Tom has pushed to expand mental health services for students through the **Mental Health in Schools Act**, provide greater resources to help tribal communities address substance abuse and mental illness through the **Native Behavioral Health Access Improvement Act**, and help secure payment parity for audio and telephonic visits for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Securing Senate passage of a resolution that highlighted the critical need to increase research, awareness, and education about **Cerebral Cavernous Malformations (CCM)** – a disease that disproportionately affects those of Hispanic descent in New Mexico and the Southwest. He has introduced companion legislation each Congress, the CCM-CARE Act, to push for additional funding and resources to study and treat this deadly disease.
- Over 20 years as a champion to improve children's health and welfare, including leading bipartisan legislation, the **Smoke-Free Schools Act**, to prevent youth and teens from becoming addicted to electronic cigarettes.
- Authoring the annual **Senate Resolution to Support the Goals and Ideals of National Public Health Week**. Tom brought Republicans and Democrats together to pass this resolution recognizing the critical role public health professionals play to keep our communities safe in 2014, 2015, 2019, and 2020;
- Advancing the bipartisan **Border Health Security Act** to promote binational cooperation on emerging infectious diseases and illnesses along the U.S. border with Canada and Mexico;
- Spearheading legislation to **address the nation's shortage of primary care physicians**, which would provide funding for graduate medical education and establish centers of excellence in primary care at medical schools.

FIGHTING ON BEHALF OF FAMILIES SEPARATED THE BORDER

Tom opposed the Trump administration's disastrous and morally reprehensible policy separating children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border, and has taken action to fight this policy every step of the way. Tom believes that people seeking asylum, especially children, should be treated with the dignity they deserve and the rights to which they are entitled.



Tom conducted rigorous oversight of the agencies the Trump administration directed to carry out the inhumane and intentional separation of children from their parents. Tom visited the Tornillo, Texas temporary tent detention facility in June 2018 to bear witness to the human costs of the policy firsthand and seek accountability for the policy. Tom used the information gathered during the visit to conduct oversight over the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Tom introduced several amendments to the HHS funding bill to increase transparency in HHS, requiring them to publicly disclose the number of children in custody and how many have been separated from their parents. Tom was able to secure report language in annual funding legislation to require greater transparency in the HHS Unaccompanied Child program, which was critical to advocacy groups fighting to end the Trump administration's abhorrent child separation policy.

Tom also fought to secure federal reimbursement funding for the New Mexico humanitarian organizations and local governments that stepped up to take care of the children and other asylum seekers during their time of need.

TACKLING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES

Tom has a proven record of tackling educational inequalities in New Mexico and across the country, especially in Indian Country. As a Senate Appropriations Committee member, Tom has worked to direct funding to strengthen our classrooms, provide resources to teachers and schools, and to support students.

Tom's record working to improve education includes:

Leading bipartisan, bicameral legislation, the **Anti-Lunch Shaming Act**, to address the abhorrent practice of "Lunch Shaming," which humiliates students whose parents or guardians are unable to pay for school lunches. New Mexico was the first state in the nation to ban this shameful practice.

Tom also secured report language in the Fiscal Year 19 appropriations bill to direct the USDA to expand access to free and reduced lunch applications and provide guidance to school lunch operators to reduce lunch shaming practices;

Introducing bicameral legislation, the **CFPB Student Loan Integrity and Transparency Act of 2019**, to ensure that student loan borrowers across the country were protected from bad actors by strengthening the oversight abilities of the CFPB's Student Loan Ombudsman;

Pressing the Federal Communications Commission to close the digital divide that prevents communities across the country from accessing the modern-day internet economy. Tom helped expand the **E-Rate program** through his membership on the Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee. He also introduced novel, bipartisan legislation to demo WiFi on school buses to help students lacking a broadband connection at home.

Championing funding for early childhood programs including the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Head Start and Early Head Start programs, as well as Healthy Start, which provide at-risk children with the early learning experiences they need to succeed in school, work, and life and support low-income parents in their efforts to provide for their families. Udall helped secure a historic increase in the 2018 budget agreement nearly doubling the Child Care Development Block Grant program.

Leading the effort to include physical education to be recognized as a core subject and secured funding to help struggling schools and districts through the 2015 reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Organized the annual New Mexico Student Leadership Institute (SLI). The annual program brings together high school students across the state for a day-long education on the federal government and the Senate. Tom ensured that his staff—from both Washington, D.C. legislative staff and staff from across New Mexico—were available to host seminars. The students annually conclude the conference with a group conversation with Udall where they can discuss what they learned and ask about issues that interest them.



LEADING THE WAY IN ADDRESSING TRIBAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION DISPARITIES

Through his leadership as vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, which oversees and enforces the trust and treaty responsibilities to Native and Tribal communities across the United States, Tom has made significant headway in leveling the playing field for Native American access to health care and education. Some of Tom's most notable health and education accomplishments that benefit Indian Country include:

- Working hard to make sure Native students have access to safe and modern educational facilities by securing funding increases for the Bureau of Indian Education year after year.
- Securing reauthorization for Diné College to ensure Diné students can learn, thrive and contribute at the college in Tsaile for years to come. The reauthorization Tom fought for includes \$2 million in federal construction grants each year.
- Introducing and passing programs to provide culturally-relevant educational opportunities for Native students, including the Esther Martinez Languages Programs Revitalization Act to help Native students carry their unique languages and traditions forward.
- Tom also worked to secure dedicated provisions from the No Child Left Behind Act reauthorization that facilitate greater self-governance, enhanced requirements for state and federal governments to consult with Tribes, and ensure that Tribes are involved in designing education programs that will best serve their communities. The provisions Tom drew from legislation he introduced in 2013, the Building Upon Unique Indian Learning and Development (BUILD) Act to secure these bipartisan provisions
- The Bridging the Tribal Digital Divide Act of 2020, addressing the vast digital divide present in Native and Tribal communities across the country. This bill was included in Senate Democrats' comprehensive Economic and Racial Justice Omnibus;
- Shepherding legislation through the House of Representatives—and later working with Senator Jeff Bingaman to sign the bill into law—to expand coverage for Indian women with breast or cervical cancer, the Native American Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Technical Amendment Act.
- Securing \$8 billion in funding in federal COVID-19 relief packages to allow Native and Tribal communities to test and contact trace infections; and
- Passing legislation, the Native American Methamphetamine Enforcement and Treatment Act into law that would include territories and Indian Tribes as eligible grant recipients to address methamphetamine use and enforcement.
- Secured \$13 million in funding for new Indian Health Services (IHS) substance abuse programs in 2017 including \$2 million in new funding specifically for partner detoxification facilities, such as Na'Nizhoozhi Center Inc. (NCI) in Gallup. This funding helped NCI remain open and expand detoxification services. Tom fought to keep this critical funding going and it continues to sustain NCI and other programs.