

Officials, others remember Pete Domenici

Written by By Matthew Reichbach NM Political Report
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Wednesday morning, news broke that former U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici died at the age of 85.

Domenici served six terms in office and was widely respected in the state and beyond. Nearly immediately, remembrances and statements from New Mexico officials and others began flowing in, lauding Domenici, both from his fellow Republicans and Democrats who respected his work.

NM Political Report collected the statements throughout the day, many of which referenced his work on mental health and his support of New Mexico's national labs.

Gov. Susana Martinez called it a "sad day for all New Mexicans."

"His devotion to our state was evident throughout his lengthy career. He tirelessly advocated for a better future for all New Mexico, from our labs and military bases to infrastructure and our innovation centers. Senator Domenici was also a champion of higher education, pioneering the Domenici Public Policy Conference which, even today, brings national leaders in government and innovation to New Mexico to help guide future generations of policymakers," Martinez said. "While we mourn Senator Domenici's loss, we celebrate his legacy as a champion for New Mexico and our nation. There is no doubt generations of New Mexicans have a brighter future with more opportunity because of Senator Domenici's tireless work. I ask all New Mexicans to join Chuck and me in extending our deepest sympathies to the Domenici family."

U.S. Sen. Tom Udall, who replaced Domenici, said he and his wife were "saddened" to hear the news of Domenici's passage.

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“Senator Domenici is a legend in New Mexico politics, and though he will be sorely missed, his impact will be felt in the state – and the nation – for generations to come,” Udall said. “While we sat on different sides of the political aisle, I admired Pete’s dedication to the well-being of all of New Mexico. He will be remembered for his meaningful contribution on so many issues – especially fiscal responsibility and the federal budget, energy policy and New Mexico’s national labs, free trade, and his personal and heartfelt dedication to ensuring parity in the health care system for those suffering from mental illness.”

U.S. Sen. Heinrich said his condolences were with Nancy Domenici and the Domenici family.

“I join all New Mexicans in mourning the passing of our former Senator Pete Domenici,” Heinrich said. “Senator Domenici dedicated his entire life to the state and people he loved. His decades of service to New Mexico left a lasting impact that will continue to be felt in every corner of our state for years to come.”

U.S. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham praised Domenici’s work on mental health, calling it “heroic,” as well as on other issues.

“I can’t think of anyone who had a greater impact on New Mexico, particularly through his work on energy policy and securing funding to expand the work at our national labs,” she said. “His budget prowess gave New Mexico outsized influence, which helped shape the state’s economy, while meeting our national security needs during and beyond the Cold War.”

U.S. Rep. Steve Pearce called Domenici a “titan” and a “fighter.”

“Senator Dominici was a powerful voice for all New Mexicans and went above and beyond for the people and families who call the land of enchantment home,” Pearce said. “I had the great privilege of working closely with Senator Dominici over the years, and fostered a relationship with him as a friend, mentor, and leader. He didn’t hesitate to put every single New Mexican before himself and fought tirelessly to make sure opportunities for a better life were available to all.”

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U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján also said he was “saddened” to hear the news of Domenici’s passing and said he “fought passionately for the things he believed in and the people he represented.”

“Senator Domenici was a formidable figure who left a lasting mark on our state,” Luján said. “My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time. May he rest in peace.”

State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn called Domenici “a patriot and a devoted statesmen” and offered his condolences to the family.

“He was a bold and fearless leader and served us and the nation with dignity, compassion, and benevolence,” Dunn said. “Sen. Domenici was also a long-time family friend and worked closely with my father, state Sen. Aubrey Dunn Sr. He was a friend of the State Land Office and offered his unwavering support on education policy and land and water issues.”

“I was saddened to learn of Senator Domenici’s passing and our thoughts and prayers are with his family,” State Attorney General Hector Balderas said. “We are grateful for his decades of service to our state.”

“Senator Pete Domenici dedicated his life to public service and always represented New Mexicans with class,” Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver said. “I am sad to hear he is no longer with us, and I will be keeping his loved ones in my thoughts today.”

Speaker of the House Brian Egolf said the state “lost a tremendous leader today.”

“Senator Pete Domenici’s legacy of bipartisanship can be seen all over the state of New Mexico,” Egolf said. “From his focus on strengthening our national labs, to his tireless advocacy for behavioral health services, his no-nonsense, bipartisan approach always put New Mexico first. On behalf of the New Mexico House of Representatives, we express our heartfelt condolences to all of his family and friends.”

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House Minority Leader Nate Gentry said he was “devastated” when he heard the news and said his thoughts and prayers were with Nancy Domenici and the Domenici family.

“As we reflect on Senator Domenici’s incredible legacy, we should also recall his willingness to work with Democrats and Republicans alike to improve the condition of our state and nation,” Gentry said. “Our country would be a better place if more public officials took Senator Domenici’s approach to governing. We have lost a legendary statesman today.”

“The Republican Party of New Mexico offers their deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Senator Pete Domenici,” RPNM chair Ryan Cangioli said. “Senator Domenici’s love and dedication to our state and country was unparalleled. We will always honor the progress and success of Senator Domenici’s legacy, not only for the Republican Party of New Mexico, but also for our wonderful state. We owe him and his family a huge debt of gratitude.”

“Senator Pete Domenici’s long term service to New Mexico put our state in a position of power in Washington D.C,” Democratic Party of New Mexico Chair Richard Ellenberg said. “Though he sat on the other side of the aisle, he understood the role government could play in bolstering our state’s economy and he kept New Mexico’s interests in mind. We are sad to hear of his passing and send our condolences to the Domenici family.”

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