

Issues in Arizona

Where Rep. Grijalva Stands on Arizona Issues

Agricultural Labor Reform



Agricultural Workers At The End of The Day

Yuma County produces more than 90 percent of America's leafy vegetables during the winter months, making it the "winter lettuce capital of the world." Agriculture is the most important segment of the area economy, producing approximately \$1 billion or 28.5 percent of the nation's retail lettuce sales each year.

Over the past five years, farmers have faced severe labor shortages. Farm labor shortages in Yuma County have meant increased product losses and cost the county tax revenue, lost wages and lost productivity.

Across the United States, there are not enough legal agricultural workers to do the pruning, picking, packing, and harvesting work that keeps Arizona and U.S. farms in business. As a result, farms are closing, growers are planting less or switching to other crops, and the production of fresh foods and vegetables is moving abroad. Between 2007 and 2008, 1.56 million acres of farmland were shut down in the United States -- about twice the size of Delaware.

This is why Rep. Grijalva supports the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security (AgJOBS) Act. This bipartisan legislation would provide agricultural employers with a stable, legal labor force while protecting farmworkers from exploitative working conditions. If enacted, AgJOBS would:

- create an "earned legalization" program enabling many undocumented farmworkers and H-2A guestworkers to earn a "blue card" temporary immigration status with the possibility of becoming permanent residents of the U.S. by continuing to work in agriculture and by meeting additional requirements; and
- revise the existing H-2A temporary foreign agricultural worker program.

Rep. Grijalva believes in a solution that helps the laborers, employers and wider communities of Southern Arizona.

Border Ports of Entry



The Nogales Mariposa Border Port of Entry

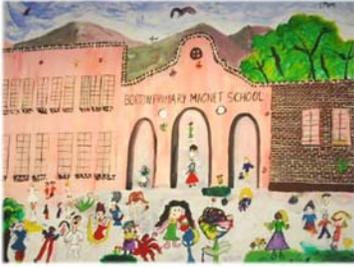
Rep. Grijalva understands the value that safe, efficient ports of entry bring to border communities and the national economy. Border ports are home to many federal agencies, including Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Justice, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Border Patrol, the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Together, these agencies protect our country from those who would do us harm, ensure that all persons and cargo crossing the border are safe and legal, and facilitate commerce by making our borders more efficient.

Rep. Grijalva worked closely with federal and Congressional authorities to fund an improvement project at Arizona's Mariposa Port of Entry through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act -- a project that was recognized as one of the [best facilities in the entire federal government](#) in January 2011. Unfortunately, many ports of entry -- integral components of our national and economic security -- have been neglected. This neglect has serious economic implications.

- A [2006 study](#) estimated that wait times at the border due to insufficient lanes, inspectors, and technology at ports of entry results in about \$2 billion in lost economic output in the San Diego region alone, every year. Each additional 15 minutes of wait time at ports of entry represents an additional \$1 billion loss in productivity and a loss of 134,000 jobs in the bi-national border region.
- According to a [2007 study](#) by the Government Accountability Office, CBP's model estimates that CBP may need up to several thousand more officers and agricultural specialists to operate its ports of entry. According to field officials, lack of staff is affecting their ability to carry out border security responsibilities.
- The Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority, comprising Nogales International Airport, Morley Pedestrian Gate, Dennis DeConcini Port of Entry and the Mariposa (Nogales West) Port of Entry, reports a current operational deficit of [between 200 and 300 full time officers](#) for both commercial and non-commercial operations. Douglas needs an additional 30 officers and San Luis needs another 40.

On June 10, 2010, Rep. Grijalva [wrote a letter](#) to President Obama requesting "\$300 million for the CBP and the General Services Administration to upgrade technology and infrastructure and ensure adequate CBP staffing across our southwestern border." On July 30, 2010, [he applauded](#) Congress passing HR 6080, a border security funding measure he co-sponsored, that included much of the funding he requested. Rep. Grijalva has continued to push for greater funding and staffing at ports of entry - investing in those jobs creates economic and security benefits throughout Southwest and the entire country.

Education



Student Art of Borton Elementary in Tucson

Rep. Grijalva believes education is the most important factor in sustained economic growth, both at the individual and community level. Southern Arizona has faced, in recent years, the stress of high unemployment rates and a shrinking commitment from the state government to education at all levels, from early childhood to adult education. Making important investments in education at the federal level can help to turn this around.

As a member of the Education and Workforce Committee, Rep. Grijalva has spent many years helping define education policy. One of the top educational issues affecting Southern Arizona is the current K-12 federal policy known as No Child Left Behind. In his time in Congress, Rep. Grijalva has seen the unintended damage this law has done to schools and school districts all across Southern Arizona. He has had many opportunities to hear from educators and school leaders throughout Southern Arizona about their concerns, and he has been advancing efforts to increase local flexibility and control over support services while maintaining accountability for students and teachers.

Environment



Desert Saguaros in a Monsoon

Scenic landscapes and beautiful natural spaces are part of what make Southern Arizona such a wonderful place to live. Rep. Grijalva has dedicated his career to ensuring responsible stewardship of all America's public lands, including those in his back yard. Protecting the unique ecosystem of the Sonoran Desert - one of the most biologically diverse in the world - has been a cornerstone of the Congressman's career. He has consistently sponsored legislation to expand Saguaro National Park, an iconic part of Southern Arizona.

Arizona's Seventh Congressional district is home to many acres of national parks, forests and monuments. Among the crown jewels of these public lands is the Coronado National Forest, home to many popular hiking trails and camp sites. Since 2003, a Canadian mining company has proposed to open a massive open-pit copper mine in the scenic Santa Rita mountains. The proposed mine, which would operate on private land, would dump mine tailings in a portion of the Coronado.

Congressman Grijalva has been instrumental in standing up to this threat to the Coronado ecosystem. He has introduced the Southern Arizona Public Land Protection Act to withdrawal all public land in the district from further mining claims.

Buffleggrass

The spreading invasion of a non-native species known as buffleggrass poses a major threat to the unique Southwestern desert landscape. Congressman Grijalva has held on-site congressional hearings in Southern Arizona to examine what is being to combat this threat.

Grand Canyon

Congressman Grijalva wrote and continues to promote the Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act, which would withdraw approximately 1 million acres of federal lands surrounding Grand Canyon National Park from future mining claims. This bill would preserve the integrity of this national and international treasure, including the Colorado River and the entire adjacent watershed.

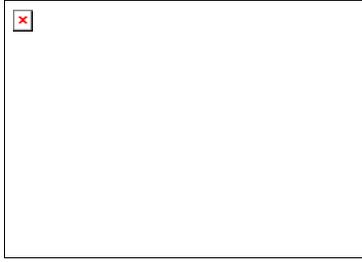
Contamination from uranium mining has the potential to impact rivers and water sources downstream from the source. The Colorado River is an important source of water and energy for Arizona and the entire region. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced earlier this year that he will recommend full withdrawal of the 1 million acres in question by the end of 2011. Since then, conservative lawmakers in the House and Senate introduced a bill to allow mining near the Grand Canyon and prevent Salazar's recommendation from taking effect. Rep. Grijalva has vocally opposed this bill and continues to lead the effort to preserve the Canyon for future generations.

Creating the National Landscape Conservation System

The National Landscape Conservation System brings together more than 27 million acres of BLM lands and waters designated for protection by Congress or the president. Rep. Grijalva was the founding co-chair of the National Landscape Conservation System Caucus and the lead House sponsor of successful legislation permanently to establish the National Landscape Conservation System in law. He has consistently advocated additional funding for the system and been its strongest champion in Congress.

There are several NLCS units in Southern Arizona, including the Sonoran Desert National Monument, Baboquivari Peak Wilderness, and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

Health Care



A Child Receives a Dental Checkup

As a state, Arizona is facing one of the nation's most serious economic crises. Earlier this year, Gov. Jan Brewer passed a \$538 million corporate tax cut plan that will significantly reduce the state government's ability to help working families and meet health care needs. At the same time, the state has substantially changed its Medicaid program, known as the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Major changes include:

- Effectively eliminating the childless adult coverage program
- Freezing enrollment by certain parents
- Creating a more burdensome AHCCCS coverage renewal process
- Establishing mandatory co-payments for children and adults
- Eliminating certain emergency services
- Creating penalties for missed appointments
- Eliminating non-emergency medical transportation

These cuts have not been without consequences for Arizona's health and economic prosperity.

According to [a study](#) by Arizona State University, the first year of this reduced Medicaid funding will reduce employment statewide by approximately 30,000 jobs. Real "Gross State Product" will be lower by approximately \$2.5 billion (compared to making no changes), real disposable income will be lower by approximately \$1.35 billion and the Arizona population will be lower by approximately 8,200.

According to [a separate analysis](#) by Families USA, "In Arizona, nursing home costs average \$64,600 a year, and 63 percent of Arizona's nursing home residents rely on Medicaid to pay for their nursing home care. [. . .] Many people who need long-term care exhaust their savings to the point that they become eligible for Medicaid. For 96,000 seniors and 154,100 people with disabilities in Arizona, Medicaid is a critical source of coverage for long-term care, often the only avenue they have to get the care they need."

Rep. Grijalva has opposed this attack on the state health care system and continues to lead the opposition at the federal level. You can read his series of letters to policymakers here or at <http://grijalva.house.gov/letters-oversight/>.

February 4, 2011 - [Letter](#) to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius encouraging her to reject proposed cuts to Arizona's Medicaid program.

March 4, 2011 - [Letter](#) to Cindy Mann, Director of the Center for Medicaid and State Operations, requesting a 90-day public comment period before any Arizona Medicaid cuts take effect.

May 4, 2011 - [Letter](#) to Cindy Mann on the need to reject Arizona's request for a waiver to freeze Medicaid enrollment and reduce existing benefit rolls.

June 27, 2011 - [Letter](#) to Secretary Sebelius and Medicare/Medicaid Administrator Don Berwick stressing Congress' intent that Medicaid eligibility not be reduced at the state level.