

John Block

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The Honorable Chairwoman Maxine Waters
The Honorable Ranking Member Patrick McHenry
Members of the Committee
U.S. House Committee on Financial Services Democrats
2129 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Waters, Ranking Member McHenry, and Members of this Committee,

I write to you today regarding the September 10, 2020 testimony in front of the House Financial Services Committee by New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. During the Governor's appearance, she raised the state's financial predicament, blaming the tumbling oil and gas prices and the COVID-19 pandemic as the culprits.

However, I urge you and President Donald J. Trump not to come to the Governor's aid, for her and her Party's fiscal irresponsibility have tanked the New Mexico economy. The Governor's brutal lockdown of New Mexico, supposedly following "science" to battle COVID-19, has shuttered thousands of small businesses and annihilated the tourism industry in the Land of Enchantment. Working families are barely surviving, and New Mexicans cannot pay their bills due to our state's inhumane closure.

As well, Lujan Grisham's initial 2020 \$7.6 billion budget, which spent carelessly on whimsical social programs, such as \$300,000,000 on a newly created "Early Childhood Education and Care Fund," and 17% raises for her already well-paid Cabinet secretaries. The New Mexico Legislature passed an emergency revision budget in a special session due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Governor vetoed millions in budgetary cuts, only trimming the state budget to \$7.22 billion.

One of the items vetoed by Lujan Grisham was \$318 million in federal virus relief for local governments, including "\$23 million for tribal governments and another \$15 million specifically for counties in the northwest with large Indigenous populations," according to the *Associated Press*. She instead diverted these funds to plug the hole in her newly created "free" daycare plan, while not taking into account the thousands of New Mexicans without jobs, especially Tribal communities suffering from disproportionate effects of COVID-19 in the Navajo Nation.

Lujan Grisham also used \$40 million in state funds without the Legislature's permission on her COVID-19 response. She is only legally permitted to use up to \$750,000 in emergency expenditures without the Legislature's approval.

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But now, the Governor is once again asking Congress to step in and pay her bills. Simultaneously, she irresponsibly spends millions on far-out social programs, pay raises for her Cabinet, and initiatives that have no germane purpose to the function of our state. She has raided our permanent fund, used earmarked state funds without the Legislature's permission, locked our state down despite few COVID-19 cases, and denied Tribal governments critical aid that Congress passed explicitly to help Indigenous communities.

Lujan Grisham claims, "We all know, and I know that tightening our belts in the coming months, and years, is critical. And in some places like New Mexico, we already have." But her all-out assault on the oil and gas industry, which contributes 39% of our budget, by signing the radical anti-oil "Energy Transition Act," is already causing oil and gas producers to flee our natural resource-rich state — something that began far before oil prices dipped and COVID-19. Her wasteful spending on unnecessary and unwanted social programs is not "tightening our belt," especially when in a crisis. She refuses to pinch pennies to fulfill her expensive campaign promises and save face with New Mexico voters.

As a native New Mexican, I see the state I know and love hurting due to the fiscal irresponsibility of Gov. Lujan Grisham. While other states are back open, the Governor has repeatedly weaponized her office to play politics with this deadly pandemic, militarize her Attorney General as her attack dog to go after local leaders, and use her platform to belittle our citizens with personal attacks.

Once a great example of growth and prosperity, our state has been flushed away by years of failed leadership and heavy federal reliance, with not much to show for it. Our state is number 50th for child well-being, 49th for Crime and Corrections, 48th for Opportunity, 47th for Fiscal Stability, etc.

New Mexico is the third most federally dependent state. Despite the massive influx of government funds, the state's leaders, led by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, Rep. Ben Ray Luján, Rep. Xochitl Torres Small, Rep. Deb Haaland, Sen. Tom Udall, Sen. Martin Heinrich, and others have squandered the taxpayers' hard-earned money.

And so I humbly request that you dismiss the New Mexico Governor's September 10th testimony and do not further fund the supposed public servant who continues only to serve her special interests and political connections while ignoring the small businesses and working families of the Great State of New Mexico.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Block". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

(John Block).