

Thursday, June 14, 2012

Santa Fe, NM – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District was joined by Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National Drug Control Policy and President Obama’s top drug policy advisor, yesterday at a drug summit in Santa Fe. They met with approximately 200 members of the community to discuss the impact that substance abuse is having in northern New Mexico and how to address this challenge.

“Substance abuse is a serious issue that affects too many families in northern New Mexico and robs too many in our community of a brighter future,” Congressman Luján said. “I was pleased to welcome Director Kerlikowske to Santa Fe to engage in an important discussion about how we can address this issue and work with members of our community to create a steady drumbeat in the fight against substance abuse.”

“Since day one, the Obama Administration has been laser focused on addressing our nation’s drug problem as a public health issue, not just a criminal justice issue,” said Director Kerlikowske. “We cannot arrest our way out of our nation’s drug problem. That is why we support a ‘third way’ approach to reducing drug use and its consequences that focuses on prevention, treatment, and smart enforcement efforts that break the cycle of drug use, crime, incarceration and rearrest. This innovative approach represents a 21st Century approach to drug policy that is grounded in science and research – not ideology or dogma.”

The summit began with breakout sessions to discuss specific aspects of substance abuse, including: prevention, treatment, suppression, tribal, youth, and community. The breakout sessions were followed by presentations by group leaders who are experts in the field of substance abuse or community leaders. Congressman Luján and Director Kerlikowske then participated in a question and answer session to address the issues of concern facing the community.

Recognizing that communities continue to feel the impact of drug use, particularly in northern New Mexico, the Obama Administration has requested significant funding to support a public health and safety approach to drug control outlined in the [2012 National Drug Control Strategy](#) .

The Administration has requested over \$10 billion to support drug education programs and support for expanding access to drug treatment for people suffering from substance use

disorders. The FY 2013 Budget also requests \$9.4 billion for domestic law enforcement, \$3.7 billion on interdiction, and \$2 billion for international programs.

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