



## **Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Statement on the Passing of Rep. Raúl Grijalva**

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) is deeply saddened by the passing of Arizona Democratic Rep. Raúl Grijalva, who died March 13 at age 77 from cancer complications.

“Rep. Grijalva was a true public servant, advocating 22 years in Congress for his constituents and Native American nations. He was a champion of the environment and an active member of the Congressional Native American Caucus. For example, he convened the first full committee hearings to examine tribal land dispossession by the U.S. government and their impacts. Native Americans were fortunate to have Rep. Grijalva as an ally,” CTUIR Chairman Gary I. Burke said.

First elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2002, Rep. Grijalva held prominent positions on the House Natural Resources Committee and was known for environmental advocacy and progressive ideas throughout his congressional career.

He was chair emeritus of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and a Congressional Hispanic Caucus member. He was also known for staunchly advocating for immigrants and Native American tribes, representing a Democratic district in Arizona along the U.S.-Mexico border.

While in Congress, Rep. Grijalva advocated for many Native American issues, including:

- The Repealing Existing Substandard Provisions Encouraging Conciliation with Tribes (RESPECT) Act that repealed antiquated federal laws pertaining to American Indians and Alaska Natives, including provisions on hostile tribes, alcohol, work requirements, and placement of youth in reform school without the consent of a parent or guardian;
- The inclusion of tribal nations in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization to protect women, children, and elders;
- A resolution concerning the 50th anniversary of the flooding of Celilo Falls; and
- The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Programs Reauthorization Act to which Grijalva said, “The United States has a trust responsibility to support Indigenous peoples in this country. The history of the United States tells us about the deliberate efforts to eliminate Indigenous peoples’ languages and cultures through forced assimilation, boarding school forced attendance, treaties that have not been honored, and promises not kept. The survival of Native languages is fundamental to the success of Native communities and the survival of traditional Native cultures.”

“The son of a Mexican immigrant, Rep. Grijalva prided himself on representing those without a voice as well as underdog causes,” CTUIR Board of Trustees Member at Large Lisa Ganuelas said. “From his work securing water supplies for drought-stricken parts of the West to acknowledging repeated calls by Native American tribes seeking to protect more of their ancestral homelands, the congressman’s voice was a strong one and will be missed.”