Honoring the Life of Jeffrey Mitchell

Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the life of Jeffrey Mitchell. Elected officials, business leaders, community advocates, and New Mexicans from all walks of life looked to Jeff’s leadership and broad expertise to build a better New Mexico.

Jeff was an economist and the Director of the Bureau of Business & Economic Research (BBER) at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. As head of BBER, Dr. Mitchell oversaw the economic forecasting for the entire state. He directed economic analysis and projections that assisted private businesses, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and cities, and towns. His regular presentations were followed closely by CEOs, political leaders, and community advocates. Jeff brought sharp insights, expert research, keen wit, and deep compassion to his leadership and policy roles. He believed firmly that economic analysis and community development should benefit the greater society and foster a broadly shared prosperity.

Jeff was also a community builder. He actively worked with nonprofits to promote renewable energy and sustainable development and was a policy advisor to 1000 Friends of New Mexico. He co-founded SHARE New Mexico, a comprehensive, web-based resource directory that ensures everyone similarly dedicated to improving our communities has the information they need. As an economist, he used numbers and math to perform his work, but most importantly he relied on his love for our beloved communities to guide it.

Jeff’s passion for life and discovery cannot be distinguished from his professional accomplishments. As a young adult, Jeff hitchhiked across the United States and Central America with a book of philosophy in his backpack, curious to learn about these great lands and their peoples. He was a humanitarian from an early age, and he started his career working on housing and energy projects for low-income communities. He was a Fulbright scholar in Venezuela and traveled through every corner of New Mexico and the world, working and learning. It was that never-ending sense of curiosity that helped make Jeff’s career—and life—so full.

Jeff especially loved the arts and cultures of New Mexico and was the lead author of a groundbreaking report that found that they contributed $5.6 billion to the state’s economy and nearly 10% of its jobs. His work on this issue even helped inform legislation I introduced—the
Creative Economy Revitalization Act—to create jobs and support our creative workers through the pandemic.

Jeff will be deeply missed by his friends, loved ones, and family. He left us too soon, and we will always remember him. Jeff’s work, wisdom, and curious spirit will echo throughout New Mexico and across our country for generations to come. It is my honor to enshrine his contributions to our state, culture, and economy in history.