



Image courtesy of the Member

## *Ed Pastor*

1943–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE 1991–  
DEMOCRAT FROM ARIZONA

As the dean of Arizona’s House delegation—and the state’s first Hispanic American elected to Congress—Ed Pastor has set many milestones during his career. But while he acknowledges the gains Hispanics have made in the House, Pastor keeps his focus on the task at hand. “The fact is I am Hispanic, the fact is there is a lot of pride in the Hispanic community. And I join the enthusiasm,” he said after first winning election in 1991, “but as an elected official you represent the entire community.”<sup>1</sup>

The oldest of three children, Ed López Pastor was born on June 28, 1943, to Enrique and Margarita Pastor. He grew up in the copper mine town of Claypool, Arizona, and attended the public schools in nearby Miami, Arizona.<sup>2</sup> Pastor received a scholarship to Arizona State University in Tempe and became the first in his family to go to college, earning a bachelor’s degree in chemistry in 1966. He took a teaching job at North High School in Phoenix after graduation, but left in 1969 to become deputy director of the community nonprofit Guadalupe Organization, Inc. He served as vice president of the Maricopa Legal Aid Society in 1971 and returned to school, earning his J.D. in 1974 from Arizona State College of Law in Tempe. He then joined the staff of Arizona’s first Hispanic governor, Raul Héctor Castro, and worked on civil rights and equal opportunity issues. Pastor is married to Verma Mendez Pastor. They have two daughters, Laura and Yvonne, and four grandchildren.<sup>3</sup>

In 1976 Pastor, seeking to build on his time with the governor’s office, won election as a Democrat to the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors. When 15-term Representative Morris Udall resigned from the U.S. House of Representatives in May 1991, Pastor stepped down from the county board to enter the race for the open seat. Facing four other challengers, including Tucson Mayor Tom Volgy, Pastor won the special Democratic primary that August with 37 percent of the vote. He then defeated Republican Pat Conner in the special general election on September 24, 1991, with 56 percent.<sup>4</sup> Despite redistricting after the 2000 Census, Pastor has won each of his 10 succeeding elections with more than 62 percent of the vote.<sup>5</sup>

Pastor’s committee assignments in the House have been notably powerful: the Education and Labor Committee (102nd Congress, 1991–1993); the Small Business Committee (102nd Congress); the Appropriations Committee (103rd Congress, 1993–1995; 105th–112th Congresses, 1997–2013); the Agriculture Committee (104th Congress, 1995–1997); the House Oversight Committee

(104th Congress, 1995–1997); and the Standards of Official Conduct Committee (105th Congress–107th Congresses, 1997–2003). He was also a member of the House Select Committee on Aging during the 102nd Congress. In addition to his committee duties, Pastor served as chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) in the 104th Congress, and in 1999 Democratic leaders tapped Pastor to be one of the party’s chief deputy whips—a position he continues to hold.

In his two decades in the House, Pastor has supported a variety of issues concerning his district, but immigration and education reform have been the two causes he is most passionate about. Since 2001 Pastor has advocated for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The bill, he said on the House Floor, “would create a pathway to citizenship for undocumented young people, who were brought to the U.S. as children, raised in this country, have excelled in our education systems, and have expressed a clear commitment to pursue higher education or military service.”<sup>6</sup> From his post on Appropriations, Pastor has also championed numerous infrastructure projects in his home state, especially those concerned with energy development, water access, and mass transit.<sup>7</sup> “Whatever my constituents ask for, I try to meet their needs,” he told an Arizona newspaper in 2009. “When you’re an appropriator, obviously, you are able to do things, so I try to help as much as I can.”<sup>8</sup> He has supported many of the Southwest’s environmental programs, and he has been a frequent advocate for Arizona’s American Indian communities.<sup>9</sup> On the national level, Pastor has backed the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 (Public Law 103-182), the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-3), and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-148).

## FOR FURTHER READING

*Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, “Ed Pastor,” <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.

## MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

**Arizona State University Libraries, Chicano Research Collection, Hayden Library** (Tempe, AZ). *Papers*: 1977–1992, amount unknown. The collection consists of correspondence, reports, budget records and appointment books from Edward Pastor’s political career dating

back to 1977. These papers contain a record of Pastor’s efforts to provide a voice for the Mexican-American community in Arizona. The papers also document his years as a member of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and include examples of his efforts to represent his constituency. Additionally, there are a number of congressional research papers on domestic and foreign issues. A guide to the papers is available in the repository.

## NOTES

- 1 “Hispanic Candidate Elected to Congress from Arizona,” 26 September 1991, *New York Times*: B12.
- 2 *Congressional Directory*, 106th Congress (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1999): 11.
- 3 “Official Biography of Congressman Ed Pastor,” [http://www.pastor.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=77&Itemid=84](http://www.pastor.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=77&Itemid=84), (accessed 2 May 2012).
- 4 Maralee Schwartz, “Hispanic Victor in Primary Likely to Succeed Udall,” 15 August 1991, *Washington Post*: A9; Karen Foerstel, “Pastor Victory in Arizona Narrower than Expected,” 26 September 1991, *Roll Call*; Maralee Schwartz and Lou Cannon, “More Hispanics in Office,” 29 September 1991, *Washington Post*: A14; Mary Benanti and Desda Moss, “Hispanic to Fill Udall’s Seat in the U.S. House,” 3 October 1991, *USA Today*: A9.
- 5 “Election Statistics, 1920 to Present,” <http://history.house.gov/institution/election-statistics/election-statistics>.
- 6 *Congressional Record*, House, 111th Cong., 2nd sess. (8 December 2010): H8227.
- 7 *Politics in America, 2012* (Washington, D.C.: CQ-Roll Call, Inc., 2011): 36.
- 8 Dan Nowicki, “Rep. Pastor Doesn’t Shy away from Earmarks,” 11 March 2009, *The Arizona Republic*: 1.
- 9 Garry Duffy, “Locals Back O’odham Push for Citizenship,” 8 August 2001, *Tucson Citizen*: C4; Judith Graham, “Border Crackdown Vexes Tribe,” 30 December 2001, *Chicago Tribune*: C14; Shaun McKinnon and Billy House, “Historic AZ Water Deal: Congress OKs Settlement Empowering Tribes,” 18 November 2004, *The Arizona Republic*: A1; Billy House, “Tribes Getting Back Land After 90 Years,” 3 August 2005, *The Arizona Republic*: B1; *Politics in America, 2000* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc.: 1999): 49–50.