

honor your Self

“AS TRIBAL PEOPLE WE KNOW THE VALUE OF RESPECT...GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS NEED TO COOPERATE TO CREATE A COMMUNITY THAT WE ALL CAN THRIVE IN.”



Shannon Augare 29
Blackfeet
Browning High School
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State Legislator,
House of Representatives, HD 16

Montana State Representative Shannon Augare believes in hope—Hope for a stronger community where people feel they are being included and being heard. He also believes in accountability, from the state, local and tribal governments, as well as from individuals, to ensure that the process of government is working.

Shannon is proud of his culture, heritage and background, and is reminded daily of the sacrifices of his family and the American Indian population as a whole. As a legislator, he says it is important for him to reflect on his values, the people he represents and, most importantly, his vision. This vision, he believes, is similar to that of his ancestors and tribal leaders of the past. “Culture,” he says, “provides us with a foundation which we live by.”

Shannon says his role as a legislator is to communicate. He must serve as a facilitator between tribal nations and state governments and be able to understand both so that he may help strengthen relations between the two. He also believes in the need to build capacity for individuals and families and our community as a whole. Without this, he says, “no legacy will be left behind and my work will die.”

Shannon, who has become very involved with the Democratic Party and has become friends with Bill and Hillary Clinton, is also working hard on a multi-state initiative to help build programs to move families toward economic independence. “Mostly my job, though,” says Shannon, “is to listen.” He doesn’t necessarily believe in solving problems, he says, “because if we were to list every problem that existed, we would have a very long list.” Instead, says Shannon, “what if we ask the question, what can we create together and what are the possibilities that exist? I want to be proactive. I’m asking people who I work with to not talk about what is wrong but to talk about what is working and figure out how to expand that success.”

“WHEN I WAS A PAGE, A JUNIOR IN HIGH SCHOOL, SENATOR CAROL JUNEAU TOLD ME, ‘KEEP WORKING HARD, YOU STUDY HARD, YOU GO TO COLLEGE, YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOU COULD BECOME A LAWMAKER.’ AND HERE TEN YEARS LATER, I’M SITTING IN HER CHAIR.”

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