



STATE SENATOR
GRENE AGUILAR

2011 PAT SCHROEDER FAMILIES FIRST
AWARD RECIPIENT

Through 22 years as a primary care physician at Denver Health's Westside Family Health Center, **Dr. Aguilar** learned the interconnectedness of the health of her patients and their ability to thrive at work, to put food on the table, and to secure a good education. Her holistic approach to health and her vision for how to best help her patients took her out of her comfort zone and into the world of politics as a citizen activist.

"There's this idea that you can stay home and make the world better for your family," Meg Bost said as she seconded her mother's nomination for the State Senate 11 months ago tomorrow. "Well, you can make it a whole lot better for a whole lot more people if you get out and do something about public policy."

Meg was quoting Pat Schroeder, and from that night on, **Senator Aguilar** has followed in the footsteps of pioneers like the legendary Congresswoman from Denver, taking inspiration and using it to fuel a journey that saw personal passions and professional callings evolve into public policy and a desire to make a difference and effect change.

A first generation U.S. resident whose parents worked farm and factory jobs, Irene Aguilar saw how earning a full scholarship to Washington University and breaking through as the first in her family to go to college helped change the norm in her family to the point that the generations that follow her have accepted higher education as a family expectation.

In her first session under the golden dome, Senator Aguilar made an immediate impact, successfully carrying legislation to mandate the inclusion of people with disabilities or their family members on governor-appointed boards that make decisions relevant to the lives of people with disabilities (SB11-193), to increase physical activity in public schools (HB11-1069), and to creatively raise funds through the sale of retired vanity and original low-number license plates to establish a support system to help people with disabilities navigate the benefit process.

Her desire to make a better Colorado for her own family inspired her to become active in politics, and her work as a physician, an activist, and a Senator have all been grounded in values that not only emanate from a sense of family, but also reach out to a broad and diverse understanding of contemporary Colorado families. We are fortunate to have another champion in the mold of Pat Schroeder working to raise expectations and improve the lives of all Coloradans.



In 1973, Pat Schroeder was the first female from Colorado elected to the U.S. Congress. She served the First Congressional District, primarily located in Denver, and was re-elected another eleven times before retiring in 1997. In Congress, she became the first woman to serve on the House Armed Services Committee. She had a brief Presidential run in 1988.

This award, however, recognizes Congresswoman Schroeder's work for families. She was a prime supporter and advocate for the Family Medical Leave Act, passed into law in 1993 and signed by President Bill Clinton. This act, in part, gave employees the right to take leave from work to care for a sick family member or a new child. It is in this spirit of Congresswoman Schroeder's work for families nationwide that the Democratic Party of Denver recognizes an outstanding individual who dedicates themselves to the betterment of families each year.