



**Rep. Betty Villegas**  
D-Tucson (LD 20)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Representative Betty Villegas Honored with Richard Elias Housing Champion Award**

**TUCSON** — Arizona State Representative **Betty Villegas** has been honored with the Richard Elias Housing Champion Award by the Pima County Community Land Trust (PCCLT) during the organization’s 15-year anniversary celebration recognizing leaders who have advanced affordable housing in Southern Arizona. Villegas, a third-generation Tucsonan and longtime affordable housing champion, was recognized at PCCLT’s 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration ("Quinceañera") for her lifelong career dedicated to expanding housing opportunities and strengthening neighborhoods across the region.

Villegas worked alongside the late Richard Elias on housing initiatives and later served as a member of the Pima County Board of Supervisors after Elias’s unexpected passing in 2020, helping guide the county through the COVID-19 pandemic. She said receiving an award named after Elias and which recognizes leaders who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to affordable housing and community development, holds special meaning.

“Richard Elias believed deeply that housing is about dignity, stability, and opportunity,” Villegas said. “His commitment to working families continues to inspire the work we do today.”

Early in her career, Villegas managed housing programs for Pima County and later served as Director of Housing and Community Development for the City of South Tucson, where she helped develop initiatives supporting working families and neighborhood revitalization.

She was also among the community leaders involved in efforts that helped lead to the creation of the Pima County Community Land Trust in 2010 following the foreclosure crisis that destabilized neighborhoods across Tucson and Pima County. The community land trust model separates ownership of land from the home, allowing families to purchase homes while the land remains in trust for the community to preserve long-term affordability.

Today Villegas continues that work in the Arizona House of Representatives, representing Legislative District 20, where she focuses on policies that expand housing opportunity and stability for Arizona families.

Additional honorees at the celebration included **Elizabeth “Liz” Morales**, Assistant City Manager for the City of Tucson, and WaFd Bank, which received the event’s corporate award. Over the past 15 years PCCLT has helped create more than 100 permanently affordable homes while providing housing counseling, financial education, and homeownership assistance to families across Southern Arizona.

# **PRESS RELEASE**