



State of New Mexico  
House of Representatives  
STATE CAPITOL  
Santa Fe

11/17/17

The Honorable Patricia A. Lundstrom  
Chair  
Legislative Finance Committee  
3406 Bluehill Avenue  
Gallup, NM 87301

The Honorable John Arthur Smith  
Vice Chair  
Legislative Finance Committee  
Box 998  
Deming, NM 88031

Dear Chair Lundstrom and Vice Chair Smith,

On September 27, 2017, the District Attorney for New Mexico's 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Raul Torrez, testified before the Legislative Finance Committee on the need to increase funding for his office. We support his request and urge the Committee to consider not only increasing funding for his office but for the New Mexico State Police Department and other state law enforcement agencies as well.

The increasing crime rate in Albuquerque is a statewide concern. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations' recent national report on crime, Albuquerque's violent crime rate increased by 15.5 percent in 2016. Worse yet, its murder rate increased by an astounding 41.8 percent. Although crime rates have decreased in other communities throughout New Mexico, the spike in Albuquerque's numbers have caused an increase in the state's overall crime rate.

Albuquerque is the economic hub of New Mexico. The city's high crime rate should be a concern to everyone in the state as it discourages investment and interest in New Mexico and casts the state in a negative light. Moreover, current residents and businesses, tired of defending themselves against the threat of crime, are seeking new opportunities elsewhere.

As District Attorney Torrez testified, his office, which oversees prosecution for Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, handles about half of the state's criminal cases. In 2016, 48 percent of New Mexico's violent crime incidences occurred in Bernalillo County. Half of the state's homicides took place in the county as did 70 percent of all auto thefts in the state.

Despite this staggering caseload, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Attorney's Office only receives 27 percent of the funds allotted to New Mexico's prosecutors. This situation is unacceptable. Any

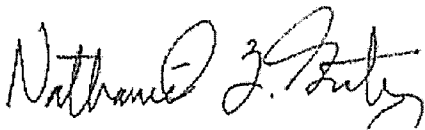
responsible budgeter knows that resources should be allocated to the areas with the most need. It is clear to us that the needs of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District have far outpaced the resources being provided, and New Mexicans are suffering.

As public officials, our first obligation is to protect the safety and security of citizens. To that end, we request that your committee provide an additional \$6.5 million to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Attorney's Office. This funding increase is essential for the adequate prosecution of criminal activity in New Mexico. It would also help ensure that precious state resources are being targeted to meet the areas most in need.

Also, we request an increase of \$5 million for the New Mexico State Police Department and other law enforcement agencies so they can assist local law enforcement in policing our communities and keeping the streets safe for all New Mexicans.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further should you have questions or need more information.

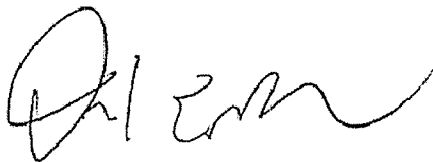
Sincerely,



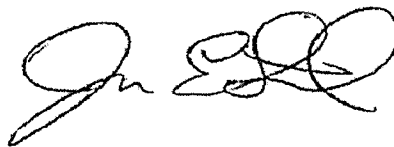
Rep. Nate Gentry  
House Minority Leader (HD-30)



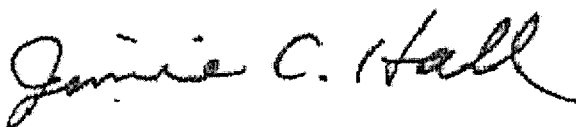
Rep. Sarah Maestas Barnes  
State Representative (HD-15)



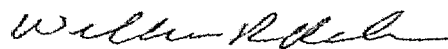
Rep. David Adkins  
State Representative (HD-29)



Rep. Jim Smith  
State Representative (HD-22)



Rep. Jimmie Hall  
State Representative (HD-28)



Rep. Bill Rehm  
State Representative (HD-31)