

LFC Requester:

Henry Jacobs

AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 REGULAR SESSION

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO

AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov and email to billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov*(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)***SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION***{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

Date Prepared: 4 February 2026 *Check all that apply:*
Bill Number: SJR 6 Original Correction
 Amendment Substitute

Sponsor: Cervantes **Agency Name and Code Number:** New Mexico Sentencing Commission (354)
Short Title: Denial of Bail, CA **Person Writing:** Douglas Carver
Title: _____ **Phone:** 505-239-8362 **Email:** dhmcarver@unm.edu

SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total						

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis:

SJR 6 amends Art. 2, Sec. 13 of the state constitution, the provision regarding bail, by changing burden of proof for prosecutors to deny bail. Rather than a prosecutor having to prove by clear and convincing evidence that no release conditions will reasonably protect the safety of any other person or the community, the amendment would require prosecutors to prove that the person poses an unreasonable risk to the safety of any other person or the community or that the person is an unreasonable flight risk.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Note: major assumptions underlying fiscal impact should be documented.

Note: if additional operating budget impact is estimated, assumptions and calculations should be reported in this section.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Article 2, Section 13 of the New Mexico Constitution was changed substantially in 2016. Every Legislative Session since there have been attempts to unwind those changes, sometimes through statute, sometimes through a new amendment to the state Constitution. SJR 6 is more limited in scope than many of the prior attempts to unwind the changes made in 2016. SJR 6 removes the provision that a prosecutor has to prove by clear and convincing evidence that no release conditions will reasonably protect the safety of any other person or the community. Instead, the prosecutor has to prove that the person poses an unreasonable risk to the safety of any other person or the community or that the person is an unreasonable flight risk.

A number of reports have been published in recent years on pretrial release in the state. The New Mexico Statistical Analysis Center (NMSAC) released its report “Bail Reform: Motions for Pretrial Detention and their Outcomes” in August 2021 (available here: <http://isr.unm.edu/reports/2021/bail-reform-motions-for-pretrial-detention-and-their-outcomes.pdf>). The Center for Applied Research and Analysis (CARA) at the University of New Mexico published “The Public Safety Assessment, Preventive Detention, and Rebuttable Presumptions in Bernalillo County” in December 2021 (available here: <https://isr.unm.edu/reports/2021/the-public-safety-assessment-preventive-detention-and-rebuttable-presumptions-in-bernalillo-county.pdf>); CARA also published a Report in Brief for that report, available here: <https://isr.unm.edu/reports/2021/the-public-safety-assessment-preventive-detention,-and-rebuttable-presumptions-in-bernalillo-county-report-in-brief>).

In September 2022, NMSAC released its report “Impact of Bail Reform in Six New Mexico Counties” (available here: <http://isr.unm.edu/reports/2022/impact-of-bail-reform-in-six-new-mexico-counties.pdf>). The purpose of that study was to analyze the impact of bail reform. The report concluded:

Bail reform has successfully decreased the number of people held pretrial and has shortened pretrial detention time overall. The decrease in days detained overall is driven largely by a decrease in time spent detained among those who spend some of, but not the entire, pretrial period in jail. It has also successfully decreased the frequency with which bond is set, both for all cases set at any point during the life of the court case and during the pretrial period among new felony cases. When bonds are set, they are lower on average than they were pre-reform. Finally, days to disposition decreased with bail reform, indicating that pretrial court efficiency may be improving overall, though days to disposition were slightly longer for those detained for the entire pretrial period after the amendment was implemented. However, the reform has coincided with a small increase in new offenses pretrial, including violent new offenses. We also observed a slightly higher rate of failures to appear following the implementation of bail reform, though the vast majority of individuals successfully pass the pretrial period. This varied, though, by county. (p. 49)

In October 2024, CARA release two reports examining this issue for Bernalillo County, “Bernalillo County Second Judicial District Court Preventive Detention Motion Review” (available here: <https://isr.unm.edu/reports/2024/bernalillo-county-second-judicial-district-court-preventive-detention-motion-review.pdf>), and “Evaluating the Costs and Benefits of Pretrial Detention and Release in Bernalillo County” (available here: <https://isr.unm.edu/reports/2024/evaluating-the-costs-and-benefits-of-pretrial-detention-and-release-in-bernalillo-county.pdf>).

For a broader look at bail and crime, in August 2024 the Brennan Center for Justice published their report “Bail Reform and Public Safety: Evidence from 33 Cities”, a comprehensive study that tested whether the bail reforms that have been implemented in jurisdictions across the country were connected to increases in crime rates that were reported in the Covid and post-Covid era. (It is important to recognize that crime rates nationally and in New Mexico are now trending downwards, and have been for some time.) The report “is the first to use data from dozens of jurisdictions nationwide to test bail reform’s causal impact on crime trends.” It found that there was “no statistically significant relationship between bail reform and crime rates. In other words, there is no reason to believe that bail reform has led to increased crime.” (The report is available at: <https://www.brennancenter.org/media/13174/download/bail-reform-public-safety-report.pdf?inline=1>).

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

TECHNICAL ISSUES

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

ALTERNATIVES

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

AMENDMENTS