

1 A MEMORIAL

2 HONORING VICTORIA CHAVEZ, GINA MICHELLE VALDEZ, CINNAMON ELKS,
3 JULIE CYNDIE NIETO AND THE NINE "JANE DOES" OF THE WEST MESA
4 MASS GRAVE.

5
6 WHEREAS, the Albuquerque police department has unearthed
7 the remains of thirteen individuals buried in an apparent mass
8 grave on the west mesa of Albuquerque, and the police and
9 sheriff consider the site to be a developing crime scene and
10 believe that most of the remains belong to women who were
11 buried there by the same individual or individuals; and

12 WHEREAS, Victoria Chavez, who was last seen in 2003 and
13 reported missing in 2004, was the first woman whose remains
14 were identified by police; Gina Michelle Valdez, who had been
15 missing since September 2004, was the second woman whose
16 remains were identified by police; Cinnamon Elks, who had been
17 missing since 2004, was the third woman whose remains were
18 identified by police; and Julie Cyndie Nieto, who had been
19 missing since 2004, was the fourth woman whose remains were
20 identified by police; and

21 WHEREAS, the Albuquerque police department has compiled
22 a list of women who have been reported missing, which includes
23 Darlene Maria Trujillo, missing since 2001; Sonia Bernadette
24 Lente, missing since 2002; Monica Diana Candelaria, missing
25 since 2003; Jamie Barela, missing since 2004; Virginia Ann

1 Cloven, missing since 2004; Doreen Márquez, missing since
2 2004; Anselma Guerra, missing since 2004; Evelyn Jesúsmaria
3 Salazar, missing since 2004; Veronica Romero, missing since
4 2004; Anna Vigil, missing since 2005; Shawntell Waites,
5 missing since 2005; Nina Herron, missing since 2005; Felipa
6 Gonzales, missing since 2005; and Leah Rachelle Peebles,
7 missing since 2006; and

8 WHEREAS, families of missing women from across New
9 Mexico file missing persons reports with police, to no avail,
10 and these families continue to search, in agony and without
11 support, for their loved ones; and

12 WHEREAS, according to the federal bureau of
13 investigation's national crime information center, there were
14 fifty thousand nine hundred thirty active adult missing
15 persons cases reported in the United States as of January
16 2007; and

17 WHEREAS, the women whose remains have been identified in
18 the west mesa mass grave site have been depicted by both the
19 police and many members of the media not as victims of
20 violence and crime, but rather as criminals themselves; and

21 WHEREAS, the labeling of these victims creates an
22 atmosphere of ambivalence with regard to the crimes that have
23 been perpetrated against them, while also denying their
24 humanity and their role in our communities as daughters,
25 mothers, sisters, cousins, nieces and granddaughters; and

1 WHEREAS, the deceased and missing women of New Mexico
2 deserve diligence and respect under the law and in our public
3 discourse, while their families deserve the right to carry
4 their memories with dignity; and

5 WHEREAS, communities across New Mexico are seeking
6 further details and a more thorough explanation of the
7 Albuquerque police department's and the federal bureau of
8 investigation's treatment of the crime committed against
9 these women, in relation to the collection of evidence at the
10 mass grave and in relation to the methods that were used to
11 determine the facts of the disappearances; and

12 WHEREAS, New Mexico has the second-highest rate of women
13 living in poverty and the third-highest domestic violence
14 rate in the United States, and thousands of New Mexican women
15 are not safe in their own homes, in their intimate
16 relationships or in public spaces, and they lack the
17 resources they need to escape the cycle of violence that
18 traps them;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that, in recognition of the heinous
21 crimes that have been perpetrated against Victoria Chavez,
22 Gina Michelle Valdez, Cinnamon Elks, Julie Cyndie Nieto and
23 the nine other "Jane Does" of the west mesa mass grave and in
24 recognition of the missing women of New Mexico whose loss
25 continues to be felt in communities across the state, the

1 Albuquerque police department and the Bernalillo county
2 sheriff's department be urged to proceed with due diligence
3 in resolving these murders; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the mayor of Albuquerque and
5 the members of the Bernalillo county commission join in the
6 effort proposed by this resolution to ensure that these
7 crimes are thoroughly investigated and that the resources of
8 the federal bureau of investigation, the Albuquerque police
9 department and the Bernalillo county sheriff's department be
10 employed in the most expeditious manner possible; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the media change its focus
12 from an emphasis on the victims' characters and lifestyles to
13 the provision of details of the heinous crimes that resulted
14 in the mass grave on the west mesa of Albuquerque; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state of New Mexico
16 ensure that services be available for addiction treatment and
17 rehabilitation for women in need of such services and that
18 state policy and funding be directed toward providing those
19 services to the women who need them rather than toward the
20 criminalization and incarceration of those women; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all New Mexicans be
22 encouraged to show their support for women who are victims of
23 violence or who are missing and for their families; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
25 transmitted to the mayor of Albuquerque, the chair of the

1 Bernalillo county commission, the chief of the Albuquerque

2 police department and the Bernalillo county sheriff.

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