

1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 HONORING THE MEMORY OF SANDRA SANCHEZ AND ALL MISSING PERSONS
3 AND VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF
4 PUBLIC SAFETY TO STUDY AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE
5 REPORTING, COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION BY AND AMONG LAW
6 ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES; REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT TO CONSIDER
7 APPROPRIATE SANCTIONS FOR AGENCIES THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE
8 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION REQUIREMENTS OF THE MISSING
9 PERSONS INFORMATION ACT.

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11 WHEREAS, when Sandra Sanchez went missing, the local law
12 enforcement agency, despite knowing that Sandra had been a
13 victim of domestic violence for five years and that she had an
14 order of protection in place, did not start investigating her
15 disappearance until two weeks after her family reported her
16 missing and did not begin searching for Sandra until her
17 family notified the media, three weeks after she went missing;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, two months after Sandra went missing, she was
20 found shot dead in a culvert in Socorro county; and

21 WHEREAS, in 2009, newspapers reported that twenty-five
22 victims of domestic violence died at the hands of their
23 abusers in New Mexico, and in 2008, thirty-four domestic
24 violence victims were reported to have been killed by their
25 abusers; and

1 WHEREAS, in many cases, children were present when the
2 victim was killed; and

3 WHEREAS, according to the national Latino alliance for
4 the elimination of domestic violence, law enforcement
5 agencies in New Mexico fail to respond to approximately
6 thirty percent of the incidents of domestic violence reported
7 to them; and

8 WHEREAS, cases like Sandra Sanchez's occur on a regular
9 basis, yet when it comes to reports of domestic violence, law
10 enforcement agencies do not respond as quickly or as
11 diligently as they do to reports of other types of crime; and

12 WHEREAS, studies have shown that police departments do
13 not treat domestic violence as seriously as other crimes,
14 despite police department policies relating to domestic
15 violence; and

16 WHEREAS, the remains of eleven women were found buried
17 nude in a mass grave on Albuquerque's West Mesa in February
18 2009; and

19 WHEREAS, the West Mesa victims are estimated to have
20 been buried between 2001 and 2005 and were reported missing
21 prior to that time; and

22 WHEREAS, upon receiving a missing person report, local
23 law enforcement agencies are required to immediately conduct
24 an investigation and to provide to the department of public
25 safety's clearinghouse all information relating to the

1 missing person; and

2 WHEREAS, the discovery of the West Mesa bodies and cases
3 like Sandra Sanchez's have raised public awareness about the
4 lack of effective investigation by law enforcement agencies
5 of missing person reports and of incidents of domestic
6 violence and about the relationship between domestic violence
7 and missing persons; and

8 WHEREAS, there is public concern about an apparent lack
9 of communication and coordination among local law enforcement
10 agencies and the department of public safety regarding
11 reports of missing persons and incidents of domestic
12 violence; and

13 WHEREAS, there is also concern about inadequate
14 follow-through on investigations and about whether law
15 enforcement's response is immediate and timely; and

16 WHEREAS, improved law enforcement response to reports of
17 missing persons and incidents of domestic violence is
18 necessary to ensure public safety and security in New Mexico;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that, in honor of the memory of
21 Sandra Sanchez and all missing persons and victims of
22 domestic violence, the department of public safety be
23 requested to assemble and convene a task force to study and
24 identify opportunities to increase reporting, communication
25 and coordination by and among law enforcement agencies and to

1 identify barriers to timely and effective investigations of
2 reports of missing persons and incidents of domestic
3 violence; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include the
5 director of the New Mexico law enforcement academy;
6 representatives from the department of public safety, the
7 New Mexico association of counties, the New Mexico municipal
8 league, local law enforcement agencies, the New Mexico
9 sheriffs' and police association, the New Mexico coalition
10 against domestic violence, the national Latino alliance for
11 the elimination of domestic violence and the New Mexico
12 coalition for sexual assault programs; and other interested
13 and appropriate persons; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force also address
15 the extent to which local law enforcement agencies are
16 complying with Section 29-15-7 NMSA 1978 of the Missing
17 Persons Information Act and identify and recommend
18 appropriate sanctions for those agencies that do not comply;
19 and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of public
21 safety report the findings and recommendations of the task
22 force to the appropriate interim legislative committee no
23 later than November 2010; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
25 transmitted to the secretary of public safety, the director

1 of the New Mexico law enforcement academy, the New Mexico
2 association of counties, the New Mexico municipal league, the
3 New Mexico sheriffs' and police association, the New Mexico
4 coalition against domestic violence, the national Latino
5 alliance for the elimination of domestic violence and the
6 New Mexico coalition for sexual assault programs. _____

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