

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 18, 2021

Contact: Matt Garcia-Sierra, [m.garciasierra@nmlegis.gov](mailto:m.garciasierra@nmlegis.gov), 505-205-5486

## House GOP calls for special session to address public emergency of violent crime

Santa Fe, NM – The House Republican Leadership team today called on the Governor to convene an immediate Special Session of the New Mexico Legislature to address the escalating and already out of control crime problems plaguing Albuquerque and the rest of the state. Republican leadership told the Governor that the runaway crime problem has become a public emergency as the crime rate continues to rapidly increase and has become progressively worse day by day.

“We clearly have a unique opportunity to finally take the necessary steps to stop the growing number of violent and non-violent crimes across our state, and we stand ready to go to work immediately to get the job done,” wrote House Republican Leader Jim Townsend (Artesia), House Republican Whip Rod Montoya (Farmington), and House Republican Caucus Chair Rebecca Dow (T or C).

The Lujan Grisham administration and majority House Democrats have focused their efforts to pass hyper-partisan progressive policies and have taken no action to strengthen criminal penalties or make it easier to keep criminals off of our streets. For example, during the 2020 and 2021 regular sessions of the Legislature, progressive Democrats rejected some 11 legislative proposals sponsored by House Republicans that would have ended the failed policy of “catch and release” law enforcement and ensured tough mandatory sentencing to guarantee that violent criminals will face serious consequences for their actions. Yet, the House majority was more than willing to pass legislation that would give felons the right to vote and strongly consider legislation that would have imposed the strongest anti-police “use of force” standards in the nation. These progressive ideas have led many New Mexicans to believe the Democrat majority feels it is more important to protect and coddle criminals than it is to support law enforcement and stop the crime that is causing fear among New Mexico’s families.

In the letter to Lujan Grisham, House Republican leadership pushed for immediate and decisive action rather than delaying any anti-crime legislation for five months until January 2022 when the next regular legislative session is scheduled to meet. The letter also made it clear that House Republicans were willing to work with the governor in order to show all New Mexicans that criminals will be held accountable for harming our citizens and threatening our safety.

Below is a list of the 11 bills sponsored by House Republicans over the past two legislative sessions:

### **2021 Session**

- HB 58 Additional Violent Felonies
- HB 59 Habitual Felony Offender Consideration
- HB 62 Prosecution Time Limit for Certain Felonies
- HB 80 Pretrial Detention Rebuttable Presumption
- HB 81 Unlawful Weapons While Trafficking

**2020 Session**

HB 32 Pretrial Bond Hearing

HB 33 3 Strikes Equal Life Sentence

HB 35 Enhanced Penalty for Firearm Used in Crime

HB 36 No Statute of limitation on 2nd Degree Murder

HB 114 Firearms and Controlled Substance Penalty

HB 203 Pretrial Release Hearing Changes

A copy of the House Republican Leadership's letter to the governor is included with this press release.

###



State of New Mexico  
**House of Representatives**

State Capitol  
Santa Fe

August 18, 2021

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Governor, State of New Mexico  
State Capitol Building, Room 400  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Governor:

We are writing to request that you call the State Legislature into special session immediately in order to address our state's devastating crime problem. We have recently seen various media reports in which you claimed anti-crime legislation will be a priority issue during the January 2022 session, unfortunately, ensuring the safety of our communities and neighborhoods cannot wait that long. The Legislature must act now, not five months in the future, to pass needed changes to our criminal statutes that will send a strong signal that criminals will be held responsible for harming our citizens and threatening our safety. The current situation can only be described as a public emergency as the increasing crime rate only seems to get worse with each passing day.

In addition, we request that you place the 11 bills that Republican House Caucus members introduced in the 2020 and 2021 regular sessions onto our requested anti-crime special session agenda as each of these bills were designed to protect the safety of our families and businesses by effectively removing career criminals from our streets, ending the failed policy of bail reform which has resulted in nothing more than a "catch and release" process, and strengthening mandatory sentencing to guarantee that criminals will face serious consequences for their actions.

The list of the 11 bills introduced in the 2021 and 2020 regular sessions by House Republicans is as follows:

**2021 Session**

- HB 58 Additional Violent Felonies
- HB 59 Habitual Felony Offender Consideration
- HB 62 Prosecution Time Limit for Certain Felonies
- HB 80 Pretrial Detention Rebuttable Presumption
- HB 81 Unlawful Weapons While Trafficking

**2020 Session**

- HB 32 Pretrial Bond Hearing
- HB 33 3 Strikes Equal Life Sentence
- HB 35 Enhanced Penalty for Firearm Used in Crime
- HB 36 No Statute of limitation on 2nd Degree Murder
- HB 114 Firearms and Controlled Substance Penalty
- HB 203 Pretrial Release Hearing Changes

As the crime epidemic in New Mexico spiraled to what is now a record breaking murder rate in our largest city, the Legislature's progressive majorities and specifically Albuquerque Democrats failed to advance a single bill in the 2021 session that would have helped to reign in this crisis. Sadly, it is this type of progressive thinking that has resulted in a belief by many New Mexicans that it is more important to protect and coddle criminals than it is to show support for police officers on the front lines who are trying to reduce our state's abysmal crime rate.

We clearly have a unique opportunity to finally take the necessary steps to stop the growing number of violent and non-violent crimes across our state, and we stand ready to go to work immediately to get the job done. We look forward to working with you in showing every New Mexican that allowing criminals to commit murder, selling illicit drugs, and breaking into our homes and businesses will no longer be tolerated.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. The future safety of our state will depend upon what decision you make in the next couple of days.

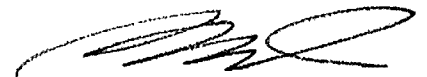
Sincerely,



James G. Townsend  
Republican Leader



Rod Montoya  
Republican Whip



Rebecca Dow  
Caucus Chair

cc: Brian Egolf, Speaker, NM House of Representatives  
Mimi Stewart, President Pro-Tempore, NM State Senate