For Immediate Release
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Governor Susana Martinez Signs Silver Alert Legislation, Allowing DPS to Issue Alerts for Missing Seniors

SANTA FE — Governor Susana Martinez announced today that she has signed House Bill 131, allowing the New Mexico Department of Public Safety to issue Silver Alerts to law enforcement, the media, and the public when seniors suffering from Alzheimer’s or dementia go missing. The governor signed the legislation at a ceremony at the Alzheimer’s Association’s New Mexico chapter in Albuquerque. Sponsored by Rep. Paul Pacheco (R-Albuquerque), the legislation creates an Amber Alert-type of protection for New Mexico’s growing Alzheimer's population and other senior citizens with degenerative brain diseases or brain injury. It was modeled after the successful Silver Alert program implemented by the City of Albuquerque.

“A statewide Silver Alert program will protect seniors who might not be able to protect themselves,” said Governor Martinez. “New Mexico seniors suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia, and their families, deserve to know that law enforcement will be on the lookout should they go missing. As New Mexico’s population of seniors suffering from Alzheimer’s and other degenerative brain diseases continues to rise, this program is more important now than ever. I’m grateful for Rep. Pacheco’s work to guide this bill through the legislative process and the City of Albuquerque for laying the groundwork for this critical initiative.”

“Issuing a Silver Alert for a missing senior can go a long way toward protecting that person from harm and restoring peace of mind to a family in crisis,” added Rep. Pacheco. “New Mexico now joins 30 other states who take this extra step to protect seniors. I’m proud that we are implementing this program statewide and I appreciate the governor’s leadership and determination to make a difference for New Mexico’s seniors and their families.”

As New Mexico’s baby boomers age, the state’s Alzheimer’s population projects to increase from 31,000 in 2010 to 43,000 by 2025, according to the Alzheimer’s Association. Among people with Alzheimer's, six in ten will wander, a phenomenon in which erosion of memory and cognitive abilities prevent a person from finding their way home.
“I am grateful to Gov. Martinez and her administration for championing this bill,” said Agnes Vallejos, Executive Director of the Alzheimer’s Association, New Mexico Chapter. “This legislation does two important goods. It aids in the swift, safe recovery of our most vulnerable citizens, and it provides peace of mind to the 104,000 Alzheimer’s caregivers in our state. Rather than leaving families to search on their own for at-risk seniors, this exponentially multiplies the number of Samaritans who might spot people missing people with Alzheimer’s.”

Governor Martinez has also acted on the following legislation:

SIGNED HB 131
SIGNED HB 18
SIGNED HB 34
SIGNED HB 154
SIGNED HB 238
SIGNED HB 279
SIGNED HB 315
SIGNED HB 347
SIGNED HB 368
SIGNED HB 494
SIGNED HB 497
SIGNED SB 14
SIGNED SB 58
SIGNED SB 81
SIGNED SB 116
SIGNED SB 176
SIGNED SB 180
SIGNED SB 190
SIGNED SB 266
SIGNED SB 312
SIGNED SB 442