

## AG Balderas announces cold case against accused child molester will go to trial

Written by Staff Reports

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ALBUQUERQUE - New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas announced Oct. 17 that San Juan County Magistrate Court Judge Rena Scott found probable cause to believe Bennie Earl Wabbington committed four first-degree felonies in 2008 and 2009 by sexually assaulting his then-girlfriend's daughter.

The young woman - still a minor - testified at the preliminary hearing in Farmington Oct. 16 against the man charged with molesting her when she was a young child.

"Protecting our children from violent, sexual predators is absolutely the top priority for my office," Balderas said. "I commend the young survivor and her family for having the courage to face her aggressor head on, and I look forward to achieving justice on her behalf."

Wabbington and three others, Brandy Stevens, Casey Stallings, and Michael Stevens, all stand accused of sexually molesting the same young woman during this same time period. Aragon, Stallings, and Stevens are expected to have separate preliminary hearings in San Juan County before the end of 2019.

Wabbington's case will next be bound over to the Eleventh Judicial District Court for trial on the charges. There is not yet a presiding judge or a trial date. Wabbington faces 72 years in prison if convicted of all charges.