

## Mother seeks 'apolitical conversation' on criminal justice system

Written by Gallupsun Staff  
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ALBUQUERQUE – On Oct. 14, Advance New Mexico released a series of attack ads against Senate Majority Leader Michael Sanchez. On Oct. 15, Stephanie Maez, former House of Representatives (HD 21) and mother of Donovan Maez responded.

“My heart broke when I saw the television ad with Mrs. Veronica Garcia and Mrs. Nicole Chavez Lucero. There are no words to describe what these mothers have had to and will continue to endure with the loss of their children. I pray to God that he heals and we as a community learn from these tragedies.

Now is not a time to exploit...now is a time for unity peace and justice.

My son, Donovan Maez spent nearly one year in jail for a horrendous crime he did not commit. HOW is that justice? If Governor [Susana] Martinez had her way, Donovan would have been convicted and executed for a murder he had no had knowledge of. Death is irreversible. Another life lost.

I'm grateful we have champions like Senator Michael Sanchez that protect and uphold the fundamental tenant of our judicial system...fairness and morality. It takes strength and leadership among the voices of fear inspired opposition to do the right thing. He has and will continue to do just that...uphold fairness and justice while seeking solutions.

We need to step away from political rhetoric and focus on true solutions — prevention, treatment and reintegration. Our community needs leadership in those areas and an apolitical conversation about how to truly solve the issues that exist in our criminal justice system.”

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***Stephanie Maez***

***Albuquerque***