

Governor unveils public safety legislative agenda for 2024 session

Written by gallupsun
Saturday, 13 January 2024 10:40

SANTA FE — Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham unveiled her public safety legislative agenda at the State Capitol on Jan. 12.

"This is, without a doubt, the largest and most comprehensive public safety package in our state's history," she said. "Gun violence is a significant contributor to the cycles of crime in our communities and will continue to use every tool at our disposal to end this epidemic. Likewise, we will strengthen our support for law enforcement, increase penalties for violent crimes, and once again pursue legislation to keep violent offenders behind bars pending trial. All of this will build upon the progress and investments we've made in previous years."

The governor's public safety legislative priorities include (sponsors listed where applicable):

- The Firearm Industry Accountability Act amends the state statute to allow gun manufacturers to be held liable for deceptive trade practices. Sponsored by Rep. Christine Chandler.
- Assault weapons ban lawfully regulates the manufacture, possession and sale of weapons of war, most often the gun used in mass casualty events. Sponsored by Rep. Andrea Romero.
- Raising the age to purchase automatic firearms to 21 from the current minimum of 18 years of age. Sponsored by Rep. Reena Szczepanski.
- Firearms purchase waiting period creates a protracted waiting period of 14 days between the initiation of a federal background check and a buyer taking possession of a firearm, thereby reducing the opportunity for gun violence and suicide. Sponsored by Romero.
- Prohibiting guns in polling places makes it illegal to carry firearms within 100 feet of polling places during an election. Sponsored by Sen. Peter Wirth.
- Prohibiting guns in parks and playgrounds will make it illegal to carry a firearm in county or municipal parks, playgrounds, and their accompanying parking lots.
- Increased criminal penalty of the crime of second degree murder raises the maximum penalty from 15 to 18 years – sponsored by Sen. Antonio Maestas.
- Felons in possession of firearms increases the criminal penalty for felons found to be in possession of guns making it a second degree felony. Sponsored by Rep. Dayan

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Hochman-Vigil.

- Amending the human trafficking statute increases the statute of limitations, criminal penalties, and victim protections under New Mexico's current human trafficking statute. Sponsored by Rep. Marian Matthews.

- Changes to commercial burglary statute will strengthen law enforcement's ability to respond to businesses who have revoked a person's right to enter or remain on their property due to a prior theft. It will allow police to charge offenders with the crime of commercial burglary, a fourth degree felony.

- Pretrial detention is legislation designed to create a rebuttable presumption for persons charged with serious, largely violent offenses. Unless rebutted by clear and convincing evidence, a defendant that poses a threat to the safety of community members can be held in custody pending trial. Sponsored by Sen. Craig Brandt.

- Mandated treatment will give judges a more robust avenue to civilly commit individuals who are a danger to themselves or society.

- RICO amendments will update the existing Racketeering Act by adding additional crimes to include human trafficking, rape, exploitation of children, escape from penitentiary, and tampering with public records.

- ERPO amendments are designed to amend the Extreme Risk Firearms Protection Order Act. Specifically, it will provide an expedited process where orders are issued 24-7 via an on-call judge, a requirement of immediate relinquishment of firearms upon service of an order. This legislation also changes reporting parties to include law enforcement and health care professionals. Sponsored by Reps. Joy Garratt and Chandler.

- Return to work for public safety personnel is designed to provide a mechanism to allow for public safety personnel who previously retired from PERA to be able to return to work and continue to serve their communities. The goal of the bill is to be able to shore up significant public safety personnel vacancy rates in state, county and municipal public safety agencies.

- Panhandling ban will prohibit the unlawful use of public spaces, streets, sidewalks, curbs, with the primary goal of increasing public safety and vehicular efficiency.

- Misdemeanor DWI search warrant requirement amendment will update the requirements for testing the blood of a suspected intoxicated driver to include both drugs and alcohol for misdemeanor crimes when the arrested person refuses testing.

- Hazing penalties will criminalize hazing and aggravated hazing, protecting students or prospective students in New Mexico. Hazing is a misdemeanor and aggravated hazing a fourth degree felony. This bill provides for criminal penalties for teachers, coaches or other reporting parties who knew, or should have known about hazing and failed to report it.

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- Data sharing requirements for law enforcement agencies will require the regular reporting of crime data from law enforcement agencies to the state as a condition of state funding.
- Firefighter, law enforcement, corrections officer recruitment fund is designed to provide financial support to recruit candidates to these critical public safety fields.
- Compensation increases for State Police, corrections/parole officers provides for a 14% funding increase (\$11.5 million) for State Police and an 8% increase (\$7.2 million) for corrections, probation & parole officers.

“We commend our Governor for her continued support to pass common sense gun violence prevention legislation including raising the age of semi-automatics to 21,” Miranda Viscoli, Co-President for New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence, said. “The Farmington mass shooting is a tragic example as to why we need to raise the age of semi-automatics to 21 years of age.”

