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Contact: Scott Darnell
(505) 819-1398
scott.darnell@state.nm.us

GOVERNOR SUSANA MARTINEZ SIGNS NATIVE AMERICAN SUICIDE PREVENTION LEGISLATION

SHIPROCK – Governor Susana Martinez today signed Senate Bill 417, the Native American Suicide Prevention law, at the Phil Thomas Performing Arts Center in Shiprock. She was joined by Shiprock High School students and teachers, along with the bill's sponsor, Sen. Lynda Lovejoy, and numerous other local and state leaders.

"Suicide prevention requires the attention of our entire community. Parents, families, coaches, grandparents, friends and public officials hold a shared responsibility to encourage New Mexico young people and never let the opportunity pass to simply tell them 'you matter,'" remarked Governor Martinez. "Sadly, Native American youth suffer from a disproportionately high suicide rate, and this is a problem that must not go unaddressed. I am confident that this bill will increase and improve collaboration, data collection, and resource-acquisition efforts so that we can better support Native American young people and stop the scourge of suicide."

SB 417 creates a collaboration between the state's Indian Affairs Department and Human Services Department to establish culturally-based programs designed to increase suicide awareness and prevention in New Mexico's Native American Communities.

Governor Martinez continued, "In signing this legislation, New Mexico takes an important step in addressing a serious problem that has claimed too many of our youth and devastated our families. I encourage every young New Mexican to chase their dreams with vigor, shut out any whispers of self-doubt, and commit to overcoming their fears. We must not be held back by stereotypes, despair, or glass ceilings that limit achievement and undermine confidence. Every New Mexican is capable of succeeding in school, in the workforce, and in life – and in making a difference in our families and communities."

Sen. Lovejoy also remarked, "I am grateful to Governor Martinez for signing this important bill. It demonstrates her support and our mutual commitment to making the well-being of Native youth and their families a priority in New Mexico in preventing needless suffering and loss from suicide."

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