



May 8, 2023

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Dear Mayor Tim Kelley, President Pat Davis, and members of the city council,

We urge you to protect the residents of Albuquerque from the city's escalating crime problem by standing up for your constituents and demanding the New Mexico state legislature take steps to address and reduce the city's out-of-control crime.

Many citizens of Albuquerque are scared for their safety and well-being, with one local news story [stating](#) "many people believe the city's problem with violent crime is getting worse." According to a [poll](#) conducted by the Albuquerque Journal in August 2022, an

overwhelming majority of likely voters in New Mexico described crime and homelessness as “very serious” problems facing the state – an opinion that was shared by Democrats and Republicans alike.

Albuquerque has seen a record number of murders in back-to-back years, with [120](#) in 2022. The [homicide rate](#) reached 21 per 100,000 people in 2022 – [more than](#) three times the national average and even higher than cities like Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco. Murders in Albuquerque increased by [71%](#) from 2017 to 2022. Weapon violations rose [57%](#) in 2022 compared to 2021, and motor vehicle theft rose by [11%](#) from 2021 to 2022. In 2021, half of all homicide victims in Albuquerque were Hispanic and 48% of violent crime victims were Hispanic according to [FBI crime data](#).

This sharp rise in crime is unacceptable. These statistics represent the pain criminals inflict on their victims and their families, who are co-victims.

Life is irreplaceable. Every American is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If the government cannot guarantee that it can protect its citizens’ lives, it has failed its most important and fundamental job.

Retail theft in Albuquerque has taken a major toll on businesses in the community as well. A small business owner [recently told](#) local news that crime has become so brazen that “it’s like a war every day,” claiming he’s had to spend \$100,000 in the past year on security and repairs. Business owners are [paying a premium](#) to implement new security measures to combat shoplifting. [Family Dollar](#) stores and a [Walmart](#) in Albuquerque have shuttered due to crime.

These crime rates also have a profound effect on people’s daily lives. How can someone go out and pursue their dreams if they’re living in constant fear for their life? What kind of person would want to start their own business from scratch in a city that requires additional security services to prevent theft from taking place? Business closures also deprive communities of jobs and can even contribute to the creation of food deserts.

This is especially troubling as in 2019, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, jail records showed that on a given weekday the police arrested 70 to 90 people, the majority of whom were repeat offenders. On one specific day, 73 people were arrested, and of those, 60 people had warrants.

America is the greatest country in the world because of the opportunity it affords everyone to succeed. But that opportunity diminishes when public officials don’t support the rule of law. It’s as simple as this: Public Safety = Opportunity.

Mayor and City Council – we are asking for something simple. Speak up for your constituents to the state legislature and Governor Michelle Grisham. Represent your

residents and advocate for policies that strengthen penalties for repeat and violent offenders so these people can stop terrorizing your neighbors.

Sincerely,



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National Director, Our America

Carla Sonntag
President and CEO, New Mexico Business Coalition

Larry Sonntag,
Albuquerque Police Captain, Retired

Paul Gessing
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