

# GOP Lawmakers Eye Return of Narrow New Mexico Death Penalty

Recent child killings, attacks on officers and a rise in crime have conservative New Mexico lawmakers calling for the state to consider reinstating the death penalty.



**AP**

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS, Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Recent killings of children, attacks on law enforcement officers and a rise in crime in [New Mexico](#)'s largest city have conservative state lawmakers calling for New Mexico to reinstate the death

penalty.

State Rep. Monica Youngblood said Friday she will once again push for a bill that would bring back capital punishment for fatal attacks on law enforcement and in the murder of children.

The recent attack on correctional officers by two high-risk inmates and a jump in crime in Albuquerque show that something needs to be done to stop "criminals who have nothing to lose" who will continue to prey on residents, the Albuquerque Republican said.

"I think it would be a deterrent. I mean, look what's going on in Albuquerque," Youngblood said, referring to a jump in crime in that city. "This would be a narrow reinstatement focusing on those who kill law enforcement and children."

Two correctional officers were recovering Friday after they were stabbed by two high-risk inmates at a New Mexico prison, authorities said.

One officer was treated and released from a hospital while the other was undergoing treatment for non-life threatening injuries. The suspects in stabbing would have been eligible for the death penalty. Youngblood said such high-risk inmates have been emboldened without it.

New Mexico repealed the death penalty in 2009 before Republican New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez took office by replacing provisions for lethal injection with a sentence of life in prison without parole.

Martinez, who supports bringing back the death penalty, has not said if she will include it on the legislative agenda next session.

A similar measure sponsored by Youngblood failed this year.

Democrats say the death penalty is not a deterrent and should not be brought back at a time when other states are no longer using it.

Rep. Gail Chasey, an Albuquerque Democrat, said Democrats are focused on stopping crime before it happens in the first place. "By providing law enforcement with what they need address crime in our city, and addressing root causes, we would not only honor those lost in senseless tragedies but would also increase public safety," Chasey said.

Rep. Antonio "Moe" Maestas, an Albuquerque Democrat, said there was no evidence that the states with death penalty see fewer attacks on officer or children than those states without it.

"It's not good public policy," Maestas said.

A group of Democrats and Republicans are working on a bipartisan package of criminal justice proposals, Maestas said.

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