



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

---

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor  
Lynn Trujillo, Secretary  
Nadine Padilla, Deputy Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Sherrie Catanach  
Public Relations Manager, IAD  
[Sherrie.catanach2@state.nm.us](mailto:Sherrie.catanach2@state.nm.us)  
(505) 469-7599

January 14, 2022

**Legislation Pre-filed to Establish  
a “Missing in New Mexico” Event**

*Annual event will support New Mexicans with missing relatives*

**Santa Fe, NM** – Today, a bill to establish an annual event to support New Mexicans with missing relatives has been pre-filed in the New Mexico Legislature.

Previously announced by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham as a focus for the 2022 legislative session, the legislation requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to sponsor an annual missing persons day event in partnership with relevant agencies. This event provides an opportunity for individuals and families to file a missing person report or update existing reports, submit DNA, meet with an investigator, and receive support services. The legislation is sponsored by Senate Majority Whip Linda M. Lopez and Representative Andrea Romero.

This annual one-day event will bring together multiple partners across all levels of government to assist and serve families and victims in the pursuit of justice and resolution. DPS will partner with the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) to host the annual event, supporting families by bringing resources and partners to a central location. The NamUs missing persons database and related divisions support the resolution of missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases by offering case consultations, collecting biometric data (DNA, fingerprints, images), and offering training about this critical database to communities.

“As a member of the MMIWR Task Force and Community Impact Subcommittee, I am honored to sponsor this legislation that will offer much needed support to families and communities that are longing for answers about their missing loved one,” said Sen. Linda M. Lopez. “The Missing in New Mexico Day event is a first step to improve

missing persons reports and offer families the opportunity to highlight their relative's case with the media and provide support services to promote healing.”

“Since 2019, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives Task Force has blossomed into an incredibly powerful force for changing the way we protect and serve our indigenous communities,” said Rep. Andrea Romero. “Their policy recommendations have come to fruition by creating an avenue for families and loved ones to come forward who have suffered the disappearance, and even loss, of precious relatives. Missing in New Mexico Day brings us one step closer to healing our state and bringing justice to those who have gone without it for too long.”

“It remains critical that we keep working together in order to identify – and hopefully solve – missing persons cases,” said Lynn Trujillo, IAD Secretary, and MMIWR Chairwoman. “This event would give families an opportunity to meet with other grieving families and provides an opportunity to speak with a detective about their relative's case.”

This legislation is a product of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) Task Force, the creation of which was enacted in 2019 by Gov. Lujan Grisham – the mission of the task force was [further expanded by the governor](#) in 2021.

The need for this event is evidenced by the data; New Mexico currently has 946 active missing persons cases and 20 unidentified missing persons reported in NCIC.

**This annual event will:**

- Support families to elevate their loved one's case and promote public awareness.
- Elevate the visibility of missing persons cases across our state
- Bring together public safety partners across the state to assist families and communities.
- Collect DNA, dental records, fingerprints, photographs, and other identifying information to complete the NamUs profile to improve the likelihood that the missing person may be located or identified.

Members of the public can track legislation on the [New Mexico Legislature website](#) and access committee meetings and House floor sessions on the [Webcasts tab](#).

###

*Since 2003 the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) has implemented groundbreaking state-tribal policies intended to improve the quality of life for the state's Native citizens. Our initiatives are designed to strengthen Tribal and state relations and address the challenges we face in our communities: economic development, infrastructure improvement, the protection of our cultures and languages, health care accessibility, and educational opportunities for our most precious resource— our children. Learn more at [www.iad.state.nm.us](http://www.iad.state.nm.us).*