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Contact: David Carl

(505) 288-2465

AG Balderas calls on New Mexico Legislature to protect victims of horrific child abuse, pass HB 488

Santa Fe, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas called on the New Mexico Legislature to pass House Bill 488, which would require all New Mexicans to report suspicion of child abuse to the proper authorities for prevention and intervention.

“New Mexicans have made it clear that the status quo isn’t good enough for our kids. They’re tired of the horrific crimes against children that run rampant across our state,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “The law, as it stands now, is far too narrow and doesn’t do enough to protect New Mexico’s children. I urge the legislature to do their part in saving precious lives.”

New Mexico is the sole state in the nation that only requires reporting of suspected child abuse if that abuse is believed to have been committed by the child’s parent, guardian or custodian and does not require reporting abuses committed by other bad actors in positions of authority. As the state’s current child abuse crisis continues, this is simply not good enough. In addition to the emotional toll that this horrific abuse can take on a survivor, these abuses cost our school districts millions of dollars. A recent case involving abuse at the hands of one individual in a New Mexico public school cost the state \$19 million in a settlement. Having a weak safety net for our children is unacceptable.

Attorney General Balderas invites members of the media and the public to attend today’s hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on this bill, at 1:30 PM.

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