

Martinez to call to bring back death penalty in special session

Written by By Matthew Reichbach NM Political Report
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The death penalty debate will be coming to the Legislature sooner than many expected.

Susana Martinez announced Sept. 20 that she will add the death penalty to the call for the upcoming special session, adding a contentious piece of debate to a special session that already promised to hold heated debates over fixing the state's massive budget deficit.

Martinez still has not set a date for the special session.

"I will ask the legislature to reinstate the death penalty as an option for those who murder children and police officers, as well as correctional officers," Martinez wrote in a statement on Facebook. "Those horrific crimes deserve the ultimate punishment."

She says that Rep. Monica Youngblood, R-Albuquerque, and Rep. Andy Nunez, R-Hatch, will co-sponsor the death penalty repeal bill.

She also announced that Rep. Paul Pacheco will again sponsor a bill to expand the state's "three strikes" law that mandates a life sentence for those who commit three crimes on a certain list.

Previously, Martinez said the death penalty would be part of her agenda for the 2017 regular legislative session.

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Now, she's moving the high-profile up to the special session, which will likely take place in the run-up to November's elections.

A poll conducted by Public Policy Polling for *NM Political Report* last month found that 59 percent of New Mexico voters supported reinstating the death penalty.

Martinez's call comes after several high profile deaths, including the killing of multiple police officers in recent years and killing of several children that made national headlines.

In originally calling for the reinstatement of the death penalty, Martinez mentioned the killing of police officers in Dallas.

Since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976, New Mexico has executed just one person, Terry Clark in 2001. Clark was convicted of raping and murdering a six-year-old girl.

Former Gov. Bill Richardson signed a death penalty repeal into law in 2009. Richardson said when signing the bill that he didn't oppose the death penalty but that he was not confident that the system could be 100 percent accurate.

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