



P.O. Box 95735,  
Albuquerque, NM 87199  
(505) 836-4223

RE: Support **HJR 9 Denial of Bail, CA**

Mr./Madame Chair and Committee Members:

Better Together New Mexico (BTNM) brings together hundreds of advocacy groups and thousands of New Mexicans statewide. Our mission is to unite New Mexicans through grassroots initiatives and work to positively shape the decisions that affect our lives, families, and communities.

BTNM supports HJR 9 Denial of Bail, CA. It would allow voters to correct language from a misunderstood constitutional amendment that passed in 2020 that produced severe unintended consequences. We have seen the terrible harm that violent offenders released 'on their own recognizance' pending trial has created. The crime rate in New Mexico has increased significantly leaving many residents afraid to live here.

As it is now, judges are routinely forced or choose to release individuals back into the community who have been charged with violent crimes. This includes accused perpetrators of murder, rape, child abuse, and more. We've seen too many times that this 'catch and release' system ends in further crimes committed, lives lost, and families destroyed.

From a business perspective, New Mexico's crime rate has become nationally notable and an embarrassment to our state. To say the least, too many businesses are closing outright or choosing to leave New Mexico so they can open businesses where they are not at such a high risk of robbery, theft, and endangering their employees. While this bill is aimed at the worst offenders, it should have a positive impact on all crime.

We urge you to vote "YES" on HJR 9 Denial of Bail, CA.

Thank you for considering my comments,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carla J. Sonntag'.

**Carla J. Sonntag**  
President & CEO