



**NEW MEXICO  
BUSINESS COALITION**

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**RE: Support HJC Substitute for HB 316 Relating to Public Peace, Health, Safety and Welfare; Increasing the Penalty for Felon in Possession of a Firearm**

Mr./Madame Chair and Committee Members:

New Mexico Business Coalition (NMBC) advocates for private sector opportunities to diversify our economy, create job abundance, and help businesses and individuals pursue economic prosperity. NMBC partnerships include being the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM).

NMBC strongly supports HJC Substitute for HB 316 Relating to Public Peace, Health, Safety and Welfare, Increasing the Penalty for Felon in Possession of a Firearm. Unlike several other pieces of legislation proposed this year, HB 316 correctly targets offenders of crime, not law abiding citizens who are victims of crime. We have seen the terrible harm that violent offenders who have previous criminal convictions can cause to innocent New Mexicans when current laws do not allow for meaningful penalties.

From a business perspective, New Mexico's crime rate drives 'worst in the nation' rankings. As a result, some businesses are choosing to leave New Mexico so they can open businesses where they are not at risk of armed robbery, theft, and endangering their employees. While this bill is aimed at the previously convicted felons, it should have a positive impact on all crime. The fact that much of the crime in our state can be directly tied to previously convicted felons is reason enough support HB 316.

For the reasons stated, NMBC supports HB 316 Relating to Public Peace, Health, Safety and Welfare, Increasing the Penalty for Felon in Possession of a Firearm and urges you to say 'YES' to its passage.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments,

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

Carla J. Sonntag, *President and CEO*