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Statement by Executive Director Christine Leonard on New Mexico Efforts to Protect Property Rights of Innocent Citizens, Strengthen Public Safety

Washington, DC – Below is a statement from Christine Leonard, Executive Director of the Coalition for Public Safety, following New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez’s signing of HB560, a bill that will help protect the property rights of innocent citizens of New Mexico by reforming the state’s civil forfeiture program. New Mexico law, which permits its law enforcement agencies to seize and forfeit personal property suspected of having been involved in a crime, will now include greater protections to ensure that the property and due process of innocent citizens are preserved.

“The Coalition commends Governor Martinez and the New Mexico Legislature on enacting legislation that will protect the property rights of innocent New Mexicans. When used responsibly, forfeiture can be an important tool for law enforcement to deter crime. House Bill 560 will help ensure it is used for those purposes – while balancing property rights and due process for innocent citizens. This bipartisan legislative effort will preserve and strengthen public safety and crime-fighting efforts in New Mexico, and hopefully represents the beginning of a movement that will spark other states across the country to do the same.”

For more information on the Coalition, please visit www.coalitionforpublicsafety.org.

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