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In Support of Survivors from the Leadership of the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, and the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women

As organizations that exist to uphold the dignity, humanity, and safety of survivors of intimate partner violence, domestic violence, and sexual assault, we stand behind Teresa Garcia and applaud her courage in response to the article disclosing details of her abuse by the *Albuquerque Journal*.

The story as written is a tale as old as time - taking one side in reporting what's on paper in a criminal complaint, not reporting the full picture or outcome of the legal case, and putting the survivor of violence in the position to defend themselves, again.

We know from our years of work alongside survivors that far too many people who experience intimate partner violence are later falsely accused, misidentified as the offender, or have the legal system weaponized against them. This is a painful and pervasive pattern, rooted in gender bias, racial inequity, historical trauma, and systemic failures, that disproportionately harms Indigenous survivors, Black and Latinx survivors, LGBTQIA2S+ survivors, and survivors with fewer financial resources. As coalitions, we hold a deep responsibility to speak to this truth: survivors are often criminalized instead of protected. When a survivor's history is twisted, distorted, or used against them, it not only retraumatizes that individual, it reinforces a long legacy of institutional harm that our communities have been striving to

dismantle for decades. Our values demand that we call this out clearly and unequivocally.

In a journey to serve her community in elected office, Teresa Garcia has been put back on trial to relive a part of her life that she had hoped to put behind her. Like so many other survivors, her lived experience created a new pathway into the world of advocacy where she has helped survivors across Albuquerque in her various professional positions and volunteerism.

It is because of her work with the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence and as chair of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Commission for the City of Albuquerque that we know who Teresa is and the tenacity with which she fights for people in any position that she is in. *It is the tenacity that lives in every survivor.*

We want to be unequivocally clear:

This is unacceptable.

This is harmful.

This is revictimizing and upholds systems of harm.

As three statewide coalitions, we stand firmly together in our shared values:

- We believe survivors.
- We protect survivors.
- We honor their stories as their own to share, in their own time, on their own terms.
- We reject any use of a survivor's experience as a tool of manipulation, punishment, or political advantage.

This is not about a candidate or a campaign. **This is about our non-negotiable commitment to the safety and dignity of all survivors in New Mexico.** No survivor should fear that their past will be weaponized by their political opponents in the public sphere.

We urge all community leaders, public officials, and candidates; regardless of political affiliation: to uphold the values of compassion, accountability, cultural humility, and survivor-centered care. New Mexico deserves leaders who do not perpetuate harm, but who model the integrity our communities deserve.

Our coalitions remain steadfast: we do not and will not tolerate the misuse of a survivor's private history, ever.

Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women
New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence
New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs