

# Mary Jane Garcia

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## Press Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**To: Managing Editor**  
**From: Mary Jane Garcia (D-Doña Ana-36)**  
**Re: Setting the Record Straight**  
**Date: August 26, 2010**  
**Contact: Mary Jane Garcia, 575-526-5048**

Dear Editor:

I want to set the record straight.

After the 2002 murder of Briana Lopez, an infant from Las Cruces, I set out on a mission to pass a law that would protect New Mexico children from criminal child abuse. I worked diligently for three years, bringing people together, negotiating, and listening, to different stakeholders with the goal of passing legislation that would be acceptable to the majority of my colleagues. An early attempt failed to pass. During the three year period I was moving forward with legislation, I was never contacted by Susana Martinez with input.

During the past month I have been contacted by numerous people asking me to comment on Martinez's political statements that claim credit for the "Baby Briana Act." There is no such law titled the "Baby Briana Act."

The law, to which Martinez is referring, is SB 166 which I sponsored in the 2005 regular legislative session. It was signed into law by Governor Richardson. The title of the signed legislation, SB 166, is "Life Sentences for Deadly Child Abuse." The name of Briana Lopez or baby Briana Act does not exist in the statute. It was never my intention to put the name of any child on the bill because it was done for all children in New Mexico.

In 2005, during the debate of SB 166, there were countless advocates from around the state that supported the legislation and testified during the committee hearings in Santa Fe. Martinez claims she had worked for three years on the legislation; however, it was only in 2005 (the year the bill was passed) that I remember her in Santa Fe, merely observing in a house committee and senate committee as SB 166 was debated.

In my opinion, campaign advertisements should not depict the gruesome details of the murder of a child in order to score political points and get votes. There are a myriad of issues that voters are anxious to hear about from both gubernatorial candidates. The public wants answers—straight answers—not political rhetoric and sound bites.

I encourage Susana Martinez to stop misrepresenting her role in SB 166 and stop exploiting the murder of Briana Lopez in her campaign. Please let that little angel rest in peace.

Respectfully,

Mary Jane Garcia

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