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**New Study Shows Significant Drop in Convenience Store Crime Rates After State's Regulations to Protect Workers Went into Effect in 2004**

*Study Tracks Crime Rates of Convenience Stores in Albuquerque, Farmington, Hobbs, Las Cruces, Santa Fe and Taos during Three-Year Period after Regulations Were in Place*

(Santa Fe) -- A recent study of convenience store crime rates by the New Mexico Environment Department shows those rates dropped substantially after new regulations went into effect in 2004 providing greater protections for convenience store workers.

The study compared rates of crimes from police logs in Albuquerque, Farmington, Hobbs, Las Cruces, Santa Fe and Taos before and after the regulations went into effect.

Murders dropped by an annual average of 44.4 percent, assaults decreased by an annual average of 92.5 percent, and robberies dropped by an annual average of 92.1 percent between 2005 and 2007 after the state Environmental Improvement Board adopted new regulations to protect convenience store workers and residents from violence at those establishments.

“This study shows the regulations saved lives and helped reduce crime while providing greater protection from harm for convenience store workers and customers,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “There were many critics who said the regulations were too costly and would not work. This study proves the effectiveness of measures that were badly needed.”

The New Mexico Legislature passed Senate Joint Memorial 4 in 2003 requesting a study on the problem of homicides, assaults, robberies and other violent acts against employees at late night retail establishments.

The study compared rates of 14 crimes in six state cities between 2005 and 2007 after the law was in effect with the rate of the same crimes in the same cities between 1998 and 2002 before the law was in effect. The crimes studied include aggravated assault, assault, battery, disturbance, domestic violence, drive-by shootings, harassment, kidnapping, murder, rape, robbery, sexual offenses, suicide, and theft and larceny.

The rate for aggravated assaults dropped from an annual average of 93.4 between 1998 and 2002 to an annual average of 15.3 between 2005 and 2007 – a decrease of 83.6 percent; assaults dropped from 290.2 to 21.7 – a decrease of 92.5 percent; batteries dropped from 78.4 to 39 a -- decrease of 50.3 percent; disturbances dropped from 865 to 29 – a decrease of 96.6 percent; domestic violence dropped from 170 to 16.3 – a decrease of 90.4 percent; drive-by shootings dropped from 1.4 to 1 – a decrease of 28.6 percent; harassment dropped from 141.4 to 8.3 – a decrease of 94.1 percent; kidnapping dropped from 6.4 to .3 – a decrease of 94.8 percent; murders dropped from 1.8 to 1 – a decrease of 44.4 percent; rapes dropped from 2.8 to .3 – a decrease of 89.2 percent; robberies dropped from 446 to 35.3 – a decrease of 92.1 percent; sexual offences dropped from 6.2 to 1.7; suicides dropped from 14 to 2; and thefts and larcenies dropped from 4,686 to 580.3 – a decrease of 89 percent.

The convenience store regulations that went into effect in 2004 required convenience store owners to have at least two employees working between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. or provide bullet-proof enclosures, install video surveillance systems, improve lighting and provide safety training to employees. Other requirements included exterior lighting, employee training, improved store signs, alarm systems and cash management systems.

In April 2007, the New Mexico Court of Appeals upheld those regulations after the New Mexico Petroleum Marketers Association, Indian Capitol Distributing Co., Inc, Hookinson, Inc and Every-Ready Oil Co., Inc appealed the EIB's adoption of the regulations. Those groups argued the EIB did not have statutory authority to adopt such regulations.

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