# HOUSE BILL 445

# 57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

### INTRODUCED BY

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AN ACT

RELATING TO VICTIMS OF CRIME; EXPANDING THE APPLICATION OF THE VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT; REMOVING THE DEFINITION OF AND REFERENCES TO "CRIMINAL OFFENSE"; REDEFINING "VICTIM" TO INCLUDE PERSONS DIRECTLY AND PROXIMATELY HARMED BY ALL CRIME RESULTING IN BODILY HARM OR LOSS OF OR DAMAGE TO THE PERSON'S PROPERTY; DEFINING "OFFENDER"; REDEFINING "FORMALLY CHARGED" TO INCLUDE THE FILING OF A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT; PROVIDING THAT VICTIMS' RIGHTS INCLUDE THE RIGHT TO NOTICE OF AN OFFENDER'S RELEASE PRE- AND POST-CONVICTION; PROVIDING THAT THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TAKE EFFECT WHEN A VICTIM REPORTS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE; PROVIDING THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT INVESTIGATING A CRIMINAL OFFENSE AGAINST A VICTIM SHALL TREAT THE VICTIM WITH FAIRNESS AND RESPECT THE VICTIM'S DIGNITY AND PRIVACY AND SHALL TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO PROVIDE FOR THE VICTIM'S PROTECTION; REQUIRING THE DIRECTOR OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE

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COURTS, THE CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT AND EACH BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION
SYSTEMS FOR VICTIMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VICTIMS OF CRIME
ACT; MAKING CONFORMING AMENDMENTS; MAKING APPROPRIATIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 31-26-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 2) is amended to read:

"31-26-2. PURPOSE OF ACT.--Recognizing the state's concern for victims of crime, [it is] the purpose of the Victims of Crime Act is to [assure] ensure that:

- A. the full impact of a crime is brought to the attention of a court;
- B. victims [of violent crimes] are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity at all stages of the criminal justice process;
- C. victims' rights are protected by law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and judges as vigorously as are the rights of criminal defendants; and
- D. the provisions of Article 2, Section 24 of the constitution of New Mexico are implemented in statute."
- SECTION 2. Section 31-26-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 3, as amended) is amended to read:
- "31-26-3. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Victims of Crime Act:

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2	court, children's court, district court, the court of appeals
3	or the supreme court;
4	[B. "criminal offense" means:
5	(1) negligent arson resulting in death or
6	bodily injury, as provided in Subsection B of Section 30-17-5
7	NMSA 1978;
8	(2) aggravated arson, as provided in Section
9	<del>30-17-6 NMSA 1978;</del>
10	(3) aggravated assault, as provided in Section
11	<del>30-3-2 NMSA 1978;</del>
12	(4) aggravated battery, as provided in Section
13	<del>30-3-5 NMSA 1978;</del>
14	(5) dangerous use of explosives, as provided
15	<del>in Section 30-7-5 NMSA 1978;</del>
16	(6) negligent use of a deadly weapon, as
17	provided in Section 30-7-4 NMSA 1978;
18	(7) murder, as provided in Section 30-2-1 NMSA
19	<del>1978;</del>
20	(8) voluntary manslaughter, as provided in
21	<del>Section 30-2-3 NMSA 1978;</del>
22	(9) involuntary manslaughter, as provided in
23	<del>Section 30-2-3 NMSA 1978;</del>
24	(10) kidnapping, as provided in Section 30-4-1
25	NMSA 1978;
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"court" means magistrate court, metropolitan

1	(11) criminal sexual penetration, as provided
2	<del>in Section 30-9-11 NMSA 1978;</del>
3	(12) criminal sexual contact of a minor, as
4	provided in Section 30-9-13 NMSA 1978;
5	(13) armed robbery, as provided in Section
6	<del>30-16-2 NMSA 1978;</del>
7	(14) homicide by vehicle, as provided in
8	<del>Section 66-8-101 NMSA 1978;</del>
9	(15) great bodily injury by vehicle, as
10	provided in Section 66-8-101 NMSA 1978;
11	(16) abandonment or abuse of a child, as
12	provided in Section 30-6-1 NMSA 1978;
13	(17) stalking or aggravated stalking, as
14	provided in the Harassment and Stalking Act;
15	<del>(18) aggravated assault against a household</del>
16	member, as provided in Section 30-3-13 NMSA 1978;
17	<del>(19) assault against a household member with</del>
18	intent to commit a violent felony, as provided in Section
19	<del>30-3-14 NMSA 1978;</del>
20	<del>(20) battery against a household member, as</del>
21	<del>provided in Section 30-3-15 NMSA 1978; or</del>
22	<del>(21) aggravated battery against a household</del>
23	member, as provided in Section 30-3-16 NMSA 1978;
24	$\frac{C_{ullet}}{B_{ullet}}$ "court proceeding" means a hearing, argument
25	or other action scheduled by and held before a court;
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	[ <del>D.</del> ]	<u>C.</u>	"family member"	means	а	spouse,	child,
sibling,	parent	or	grandparent:				

- [E.] D. "formally charged" means the filing of a criminal complaint, an indictment [the filing of a] or criminal information [pursuant to a bind-over order, the filing of a petition or the setting of a preliminary hearing];
- E. "offender" means a person accused of, charged with or convicted for committing a crime against a victim;
- F. "victim" means [an individual against whom a criminal offense is committed. "Victim" also means a family member or a victim's representative when the individual against whom a criminal offense was committed is a minor, is incompetent or is a homicide victim] a person directly and proximately harmed by the commission of a crime enumerated in Article 2, Section 24 of the constitution of New Mexico or a crime that resulted in or involved the threat of death, bodily harm, any form of sexual battery, mental anguish or damage to property in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and includes a family member of a person deceased due to homicide; and
- G. "victim's representative" means an [individual]
  independent person designated by a victim or appointed by the
  court to act in the best interests of the victim."
- SECTION 3. Section 31-26-4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 4, as amended) is amended to read:
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	"31-26-4.	VICTIM'S	RIGHTSA	${\tt victim}$	shall	have	the	right
to.								

- A. be treated with fairness and respect for the victim's dignity and privacy throughout the criminal justice process;
  - B. timely disposition of the case;
- C. be reasonably protected from [the accused] an offender throughout the criminal justice process;
- D. [notification] receive notice of court proceedings attendant to the charge against the offender;
- E. attend all public court proceedings [the accused] an offender has the right to attend;
  - F. confer with the prosecution;
- G. make a statement to the court at sentencing and at any post-sentencing [hearings] court proceedings for [the accused] an offender;
- H. restitution from the person convicted of the criminal offense that caused the victim's loss or injury;
- I. information about the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, escape or release of [the accused] an offender and electronic notice when an offender is released from a jail, prison or lockup pre- and post-conviction;
- J. have the prosecuting attorney notify the victim's employer, if requested by the victim, of the necessity of the victim's cooperation and testimony in a court proceeding .229252.5

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that may	[ <del>necessitate</del>	the absence	<del>of</del> ] <u>require</u>	the	[ <del>victim</del> ]
victim's	absence from	work ( <del>for go</del>	<del>od cause</del> l;		

K. promptly retake possession of a residence or other real property that was subject to a law enforcement investigation of a crime after completion of the investigation and to receive assistance for crime scene cleanup and professional biological hazard services;

[K.] L. promptly receive any personal property belonging to the victim that is being held for evidentiary purposes by a law enforcement agency or the prosecuting attorney, unless there are compelling evidentiary reasons for retention of the victim's property;

 $[\underbrace{\text{L.}}]$  M. be informed by the [court at] prosecution prior to a sentencing proceeding that [the] an offender is eligible to earn meritorious deductions from the offender's sentence and the amount of meritorious deductions that may be earned by the offender; and

[M.] N. be notified by the [district attorney] prosecution of the availability of and procedures to apply for crime victims reparation as provided in the Crime Victims Reparation Act."

**SECTION 4.** Section 31-26-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 5) is amended to read:

"31-26-5. EXERCISE OF RIGHTS--REQUIREMENTS FOR VICTIM. -- A victim may exercise [his] the victim's rights .229252.5

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if [he] the victim:

4	of the occurrence or discovery of the criminal offense, unless
5	the district attorney determines that the victim had a
6	reasonable excuse for failing to do so;
7	$\frac{B_{\bullet}}{A_{\bullet}}$ provides the district attorney with current
8	and updated information regarding the victim's name, address,
9	email address and telephone number; and
10	[ $\frac{C. \text{ fully}}{B.}$ ] cooperates with and [ $\frac{\text{fully}}{B.}$ ] responds
11	to reasonable requests made by law enforcement agencies and
12	district attorneys."
13	SECTION 5. Section 31-26-6 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994,
14	Chapter 144, Section 6) is amended to read:
15	"31-26-6. WHEN RIGHTS AND DUTIES TAKE EFFECTTERMINATION
16	OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES
17	A. The rights and duties related to law enforcement
18	agencies established pursuant to Section 31-26-8 NMSA 1978
19	shall take effect when a criminal offense is committed.
20	B. The rights and duties relating to district
21	attorneys and courts established pursuant to the provisions of
22	the Victims of Crime Act, except for those established pursuant
23	to Section 31-26-8 NMSA 1978, shall take effect when an
24	[ <del>individual</del> ] <u>offender</u> is formally charged [ <del>by a district</del>
25	attorney] for [allegedly] committing a criminal offense against

pursuant to the provisions of the Victims of Crime Act [only]

[A. reports the criminal offense within five days

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underscored material	[bracketed material]

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a victim. Those rights and duties remain in effect until final disposition of the court proceedings attendant to the [charged criminal offense] charge against an offender."

**SECTION 6.** Section 31-26-7 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 7) is amended to read:

"31-26-7. DESIGNATION OR APPOINTMENT OF VICTIM'S REPRESENTATIVE. --

- A. A victim may designate a victim's representative to exercise all rights provided to the victim pursuant to the provisions of the Victims of Crime Act. A victim may revoke [his] the victim's designation of a victim's representative at any time.
- [When] If a victim is deceased, incompetent or unable to designate a victim's representative, the court may appoint a victim's representative for the victim. If a victim regains [his] competency, [he] the victim may revoke the court's appointment of [a] the victim's representative.
- [When the] If a victim is a minor, the victim's parent, [or] grandparent or guardian may exercise the victim's rights on the victim's behalf; provided that when the [person accused of committing the criminal offense against the victim] offender is the victim's parent, [or] grandparent [of the victim or guardian, the court may appoint a victim's representative for the victim.
- D. If a victim's representative is designated or .229252.5

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3	designation or appointment but is not a party to the case."					
4	SECTION 7. Section 31-26-8 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994,					
5	Chapter 144, Section 8) is amended to read:					
6	"31-26-8. [PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING VICTIMS WITH					
7	PRELIMINARY INFORMATION] DUTIES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES					
8	The law enforcement agency that investigates a criminal offense					
9	against a victim shall:					
10	A. treat the victim with fairness and respect the					
11	victim's dignity and privacy;					
12	B. provide the victim with all available					
13	information regarding the investigation, including the name of					
14	the offender, unless releasing such information would impede an					
15	ongoing investigation;					
16	C. take reasonable steps to provide for the					
17	victim's protection from the offender;					
18	$[A_{ullet}]$ $\underline{D_{ullet}}$ inform the victim of medical services and					
19	crisis intervention services available to victims;					
20	$[rac{B_{ullet}}{L}]$ provide the victim with the police report					
21	number for the criminal offense and a copy of the following					
22	statement: "If within thirty days you are not notified of an					
23	arrest in your case, you may call (telephone number for the law					
24	enforcement agency) to obtain information on the status of your					
25	case."; and					

appointed, the victim's representative shall notify the

district attorney, court and counsel for the offender of the

1	[ $G$ .] $F$ . provide the victim with the name of the
2	district attorney for the judicial district in which the
3	criminal offense was committed and the address, email address
4	and telephone number for that district attorney's office."
5	SECTION 8. Section 31-26-9 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994,
6	Chapter 144, Section 9, as amended) is amended to read:
7	"31-26-9. PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING VICTIMS WITH NOTICE OF
8	RIGHTS AND INFORMATION REGARDING PROSECUTION OF [A CRIMINAL
9	OFFENSE] AN OFFENDERDISTRICT ATTORNEYS
10	A. Within seven working days after a district
11	attorney files a formal charge against [the accused for a
12	criminal offense] an offender, the district attorney shall
13	provide the victim [of the criminal offense] with:
14	(1) a copy of Article 2, Section 24 of the
15	constitution of New Mexico, regarding victims' rights;
16	(2) a copy of the Victims of Crime Act;
17	(3) a copy of the charge filed against the
18	[accused for the criminal offense] offender;
19	(4) a clear and concise statement of the
20	procedural steps generally involved in prosecuting a criminal
21	offense; and
22	(5) the name of a person within the district
23	attorney's office whom the victim may contact for additional
24	information regarding prosecution of the [criminal offense]
25	offender.

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victim with [ <del>o</del>	<del>ral or w</del>	<del>ritten no</del>	<del>tice, in</del>	a time	ely fas	shion, o	<del>f a</del>
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notifications	of court	proceedi	ngs rega	rding t	the cas	se again	<u>st</u>
the offender."							

SECTION 9. Section 31-26-10 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 10) is amended to read:

"31-26-10. [PROCEDURES FOR] PROVIDING VICTIMS WITH NOTICE OF A COURT PROCEEDING [COURTS--DISTRICT ATTORNEYS]--ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATIONS.--A clerk of a court shall: [provide a district attorney's office with oral or written notice no later than seven working days prior to a scheduled court proceeding attendant to a criminal offense, unless a shorter notice period is reasonable under the circumstances. The district attorney's office shall convey the information concerning the scheduled court proceeding to the victim, as provided in Subsection B of Section 9 of the Victims of Crime Act]

A. enter all notices for court proceedings into the electronic notification system established by the administrative office of the courts; and

B. provide a victim with electronic notification of a court hearing when it is scheduled and again before the court proceeding."

SECTION 10. Section 31-26-11 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, .229252.5

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Chapter	144,	Section	11,	as	amended)	is	amended	to	read:

"31-26-11. PROCEDURES WHEN AN INMATE OR DELINQUENT CHILD ESCAPES--CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT--CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT.--[A.] The corrections department or the children, youth and families department shall immediately notify the [sentencing judge or the children's court judge, the district attorney of the judicial district from which the inmate or delinquent child was committed and the probation officer who authored the presentence report when an inmate or delinquent child yictim if an offender:

[\(\frac{(1)}{1}\)] A. escapes from a correctional facility or juvenile justice facility [\(\frac{under the jurisdiction of the}{corrections department or the children, youth and families \(\frac{department}{department}\)]; or

[(2) convicted in New Mexico of a capital, first degree or second degree felony and]

B. was transferred to a facility under the jurisdiction of another state and escapes from that facility.

[B. The district attorney shall immediately notify any person known to reside in his district who was a victim of the criminal or delinquent offense for which the inmate or delinquent child was committed.]"

SECTION 11. Section 31-26-12 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 12, as amended) is amended to read:

"31-26-12. PROCEDURES WHEN AN INMATE IS RELEASED FROM .229252.5

INCARCERATIONADULT PAROLE BOARDCORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURES WHEN A DELINQUENT CHILD IS RELEASED FROM CUSTODY
[ <del>JUVENILE PAROLE BOARD</del> ] CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
DEPARTMENTDISTRICT ATTORNEYS

A. A county jail shall notify a victim before an offender's release.

[A.] B. The adult parole board [and] or the children, youth and families department shall [provide a copy of their respective regular release dockets to each district attorney in the state at least ten working days before the docket is considered. The district attorney shall notify any person known to reside in the district who was a victim of the criminal offense for which the inmate was incarcerated or the delinquent child was committed.

B. The adult parole board or the children, youth and families department shall provide a copy of a supplemental, addendum or special docket to each district attorney at least five working days before the release docket is considered] notify a victim as soon as practicable before an offender's release is considered.

C. Following consideration of [a release docket] an offender's release by the adult parole board or the children, youth and families department, the board and department shall promptly notify [each district attorney] a victim of recommendations for release of [an inmate from incarceration or .229252.5

a delinquent child from custody. The district attorney shall notify any person known to reside in the district attorney's district who was a victim of the criminal offense for which the inmate was incarcerated or the delinquent child was committed] the offender.

D. In the case of an [inmate] offender scheduled to be released from incarceration or commitment without parole or prior to parole for any reason, [or a delinquent child scheduled to be released from custody] the corrections department or the children, youth and families department shall notify [each district attorney at least fifteen working days before the inmate's or delinquent child's release. The district attorney shall notify any person known to reside in the district who was a victim of the criminal offense for which the inmate was incarcerated or the delinquent child was committed] the victim immediately."

SECTION 12. Section 31-26-14 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 144, Section 14) is amended to read:

"31-26-14. EFFECT OF NONCOMPLIANCE.--[A person accused or convicted of a crime against a victim] An offender shall not have [no] standing to object to [any] a failure by [any] the state, a political subdivision of the state or a person to comply with the provisions of the Victims of Crime Act."

SECTION 13. Section 31-26-15 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2009, Chapter 95, Section 4) is amended to read:
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## "31-26-15. IDENTITY THEFT PASSPORT--DATABASE.--

- A. The attorney general, in cooperation with the department of public safety and the motor vehicle division of the taxation and revenue department, shall issue an identity theft passport to a person who claims to be a victim of identity theft pursuant to Section 30-16-24.1 NMSA 1978 and who provides to the attorney general:
- (1) a certified copy of a court order obtained pursuant to Section [5 of this 2009 act] 31-26-16 NMSA 1978 or a full set of fingerprints;
- (2) a driver's license or other governmentissued identification or record; and
- (3) other information as required by the attorney general.
- B. An identity theft passport shall contain a picture of the person to whom it was issued and other information as the attorney general deems appropriate.
- C. The attorney general may enter into a memorandum of understanding with the motor vehicle division of the taxation and revenue department for the development and issuance of a secure form of identity theft passport. When an identity theft passport is issued, the motor vehicle division shall note on the person's driver record that an identity theft passport has been issued.
- D. An [identify] identity theft passport shall be .229252.5

accepted as evidence of identity by law enforcement officers and others who may challenge the person's identity.

- E. The attorney general shall maintain a database of identity theft victims who have reported to a law enforcement agency or have been issued an identity theft passport. The attorney general may provide access to the database only to criminal justice agencies. For purposes of identification and authentication, the attorney general may allow access to specific information about a person who has become a victim of identity theft to that person or to that person's authorized representative.
- F. The attorney general shall keep on file each application for an identity theft passport and each police report of identity theft submitted by a law enforcement agency.
- G. The attorney general shall prepare and make available to local law enforcement agencies and to the general public an information packet that includes information on how to prevent and stop identity theft."
- **SECTION 14.** A new section of the Victims of Crime Act is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR VICTIMS

OF CRIME.--

A. As used in this section, "electronic notification" means an automated communication received by email, phone call or text message.

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- B. The director of the administrative office of the courts, each board of county commissioners and the corrections department shall establish and maintain separate electronic notification systems to provide notice to victims in accordance with the Victims of Crime Act.
- C. The electronic notification systems established pursuant to Subsection B of this section shall:
  - (1) be an optional service for a victim; and
- (2) integrate information maintained by the administrative office of the courts, each board of county commissioners and the corrections department."
- **SECTION 15.** A new section of the Victims of Crime Act is enacted to read:
- "[NEW MATERIAL] VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE FUND
  CREATED.--
- A. The "victims of crime assistance fund" is created as a nonreverting fund in the state treasury. The fund consists of appropriations, gifts, grants, donations and income from investment of the fund.
- B. The state department of justice shall administer the fund, and money in the fund is appropriated to the state department of justice to contract for services to assist victims with crime scene cleanup and professional biological hazard services; provided that such assistance may be rendered only after a state or local police department, county sheriff .229252.5

or district attorney certifies in writing that the victim qualifies for such assistance in accordance with the Victims of Crime Act and the rules of the state department of justice.

C. Expenditures from the fund shall be made by warrant of the secretary of finance and administration pursuant to vouchers signed by the attorney general or the attorney general's authorized representative."

### SECTION 16. APPROPRIATIONS.--

- A. The following amounts are appropriated from the general fund for expenditure in fiscal year 2026, and any unexpended or unencumbered balances remaining at the end of fiscal year 2026 shall revert to the general fund:
- (1) one million dollars (\$1,000,000) to the administrative office of the courts to establish and maintain an electronic notification system to provide notice of court proceedings pursuant to the provisions of the Victims of Crime Act;
- (2) five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the local government division of the department of finance and administration for the boards of county commissioners to establish and maintain an electronic notification system pursuant to the provisions of the Victims of Crime Act; and
- (3) five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the corrections department to establish and maintain an electronic notification system to provide notice to victims

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pursuant to the provisions of the Victims of Crime Act.

Five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the victims of crime assistance fund for expenditure in fiscal year 2026 and subsequent fiscal years to contract for services to assist victims with crime scene cleanup and professional biological hazard services. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

REPEAL.--Section 31-26-10.1 NMSA 1978 (being SECTION 17. Laws 2005, Chapter 283, Section 1) is repealed.

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