

**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2025 REGULAR SESSION**

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**SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

***SUBSTITUTE ANALYSIS***

**Date Prepared:** 2/10/2025

**Bill Number:** SB41

**Sponsor:** Charley / Abeyta

**Short Title:** Turquoise Alert System

**Agency Name and Code Number:** NM Indian Affairs Dept 60900

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**Section II: FISCAL IMPACT**

**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26		
\$0	\$0	NA	NA

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate expenditure decreases)

**REVENUE (dollars in thousands)**

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26	FY27		
\$0	\$0	\$0	NA	NA

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate revenue decreases)

**ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)**

	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>FY27</b>	<b>3 Year Total Cost</b>	<b>Recurring or Nonrecurring</b>	<b>Fund Affected</b>
<b>Total</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	NA	NA

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:  
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

**SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis: This bill establishes a new "Turquoise Alert" system specifically designed to help locate missing American Indians in New Mexico. The bill adds a definition for "turquoise alert" to the state's existing Missing Persons Information and Reporting Act, defining it as a notification system for missing persons who are either enrolled members or eligible for enrollment in a federally recognized Indian nation, tribe, or pueblo. The Department of Public Safety is mandated to develop and implement a comprehensive alert plan that includes procedures for rapidly disseminating information about the missing person through various channels, including lead radio stations, print and broadcast media, cellular service companies, state and federal law enforcement agencies, and state employees. The alert plan requires detailed record-keeping about each turquoise alert, including information such as the municipality where the report originated, the missing person's age, gender, report date, alert issue date, and recovery date. Only the Department of Public Safety or the lead investigating law enforcement agency can initiate and terminate a turquoise alert. This new system is designed to improve the chances of locating missing American Indians by quickly spreading awareness through multiple communication platforms.

Substitution: The substitution modifies the Turquoise Alert definition by removing “a missing person” to instead include:

1. The person is missing due to involuntary, unexplained, or suspicious circumstances.
2. The person's safety or health may be endangered.
3. The individual may be a victim of human trafficking.
4. The person suffers from a mental or physical disability or substance use disorder.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The bill does not contain any appropriations. There is no fiscal impact to the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department.

Substitution: There is no fiscal impact to the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department.

**SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

Implementing an alert is a vital tool for rapidly disseminating information to assist in locating

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missing American Indian people. By quickly alerting the public and law enforcement about missing individuals, the chances of recovery increase significantly.

Three other states (California, Washington, and Colorado) have similar alerts, called the Feather Alert. In 2022, Washington state mandated the system, and out of 114 alerts issued, 111 people were located.

Without such an alert system, it is likely that missing and endangered American Indians recovery rates will continue to be low. According to the NM Department of Justice, Native American face disproportionately high rates of disappearances and violence. Native people account for 16% of missing persons in New Mexico. Additionally, Albuquerque and Gallup rank among the top cities in Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) cases nationwide. From the NM Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives Task Force, it was found that over 50% of missing persons in McKinley and San Juan counties were Native American from 2014-2019.

The Turquoise Alert Bill implements objectives 5 and 6 of the State Response Plan.

Substitution: The modified definition clarifies who is subject to the Alert.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

## **ALTERNATIVES**

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

Regular reporting and data tracking of missing Native Americans ensures transparency and continuous improvement on processes and communication. This bill requires a report to continually bring awareness to jurisdictional complexities and enhances collaboration between tribal, state, and federal agencies.

## **AMENDMENTS**