



# State of New Mexico

*Office of the Lieutenant Governor*

**Diane D. Denish**  
*Lieutenant Governor*

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## **Lt. Governor Denish and Sepich Family Tout Katie's Law Success**

**Santa Fe** – Lt. Governor Diane Denish and Jayann, Dave, and Caraline Sepich today commemorated the passage of Katie's Law that requires DNA testing for felony arrests.

"There are rare occasions when personal tragedy can lead to profound and positive change. We paid tribute today to one such occasion," said Lt. Governor Diane Denish. "I was proud to lead the effort to pass Katie's Law. Preventing any crime is ideal, but stopping repeat offenders is vital – that is where we know an innocent life can be spared. If our police are to stop these offenders, government must provide them with the necessary tools, and Katie's Law has proven to be an exceptional tool. Enacting this law to crack-down on repeat offenders is where government fulfills its promise to protect our families."

Passed in March of 2006, Katie's Law took effect in January of 2007. The law requires DNA swab testing for anyone arrested on felony charges, expanding law that required DNA testing for felony convictions. The DNA samples are then checked against a national database of DNA collected from violent crime scenes.

"We are proud of the success of Katie's Law in New Mexico. DNA taken upon felony arrest has the power to do more than just solve crimes---it prevents crimes and in doing so saves lives. Over 58 matches to crime scene DNA have been made since the inception of Katie's Law in January of 2007," said Jayann Sepich. "Sixteen states have now passed DNA arrestee testing legislation. We are hopeful that the other 34 will join New Mexico in using DNA technology to prevent crimes and save lives. We will never stop missing our Katie, but are incredibly honored to have this law in her memory, and find healing in knowing other families will be spared the pain of losing a much loved child." To date, matching arrestees' DNA to DNA evidence taken from unsolved cases has led to the identification of perpetrators in 6 homicides, 11 sexual assaults, and 1 kidnapping as well as other crimes including 40 burglaries.

The Sepichs have been instrumental in the national movement to expand DNA testing to include felony arrests, personally lobbying state legislatures. Senator Mary Kay Papen, Senator Vernon Asbill, and Representative John Heaton sponsored the bill in New Mexico in 2006.

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(Left to Right): Senator Vernon Asbill, State Police Chief Ferron Segotta, Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish, Dave Sepich, Jayann Sepich, Assistant Attorney General Steve Suttle, John Crebs, Senator Mary Kay Papen, George Marquez.