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COMMUNITY MEMBERS, FAMILIES OF POLICE VIOLENCE VICTIMS RAISE THEIR VOICES IN SUPPORT OF DAMON MARTINEZ'S ADVOCACY ON THEIR BEHALF

STATEMENTS POUR IN RESPONDING TO ATTACKS BY DC-BASED POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

ALBUQUERQUE, NM - In response to malicious attack ads that question Damon Martinez' commitment to ending police violence, community members and family members of victims of police violence raised their voices in defense of a progressive prosecutor who has always defended them and their civil rights:

JEWEL HALL

“As a woman who grew up in the segregated south, and as a mother who lost her son to police brutality years ago, I trust Damon’s commitment to civil rights. He will be a true public servant in Washington. I first met Damon when he came to community meetings regarding problems with the Albuquerque Police Department. I was touched by his compassion, his understanding, and his willingness to listen. **Because of Damon’s leadership, we are actually seeing changes in how our police force conducts itself, which means fewer mothers will suffer the loss I have suffered.** As I watch these attack ads, which twist the truth for their own purposes, I have to wonder, where was this DC organization before, when I and others were working so hard to end the police violence against our kids? They show up to criticize someone who has done the hard work of advocating for us, but they’ve been nowhere and done nothing to help us.” -

(Read background on Jewel Hall here:

<https://www.abqjournal.com/1078228/longtime-civil-rights-activist-leaving-post-excerpt-jewel-l-hall-grew-up-in-south-during-segregation.html>)

STEVE AND RENETTA TORRES

“We are Stephen and Renetta Torres, and we support Damon Martinez for Congress. In 2011 our son, Christopher, was tragically killed by two Albuquerque Police Department officers in what became an established pattern of excessive use of force. The recent ad attacking Damon Martinez is

misleading and disingenuous. The truth is that the 27 instances of deadly use of excessive force by APD, cited in the United States Department of Justice report, occurred before he was appointed U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico. Once appointed, he demonstrated a strong interest and a willingness to listen to community groups and the families of the police shooting victims. We felt that we had a strong advocate who was going to work towards desperately needed reform and sustained change that would be achieved in a collaborative manner.

Damon Martinez has demonstrated that he is a person of strong convictions and honor who will work hard to provide the strong and thoughtful leadership that we deserve as our next United States Congressman.”

JONATHAN SIEGEL

“I sat on the City’s Police Oversight Commission during those difficult years when the shootings spiked; this attack on Damon Martinez is uninformed and twisted. In point of fact, the Justice Department brought in Civil Rights specialists from both California and DC to investigate the situation. Under Damon’s watch the review was completed and the civil rights attorneys joined Damon in announcing the findings regarding the violations of civil rights, and, at his insistence, moved to Federal Court where the City finally entered into a Settlement Agreement. His final report outlined modifications to the oversight process, which were later incorporated into the new and stronger civilian oversight board. **Damon Martinez made activists feel welcome in his office, so that we knew that we were being heard. We respected him for his constructive approach and the steady moral and ethical compass he exhibited as U.S. Attorney in dealing with this matter.”**

MARIA BAUTISTA AND NYIRA GITANA

“In 2013, we were the unfortunate victims of a home invasion by four Albuquerque police officers who had the wrong house. They stormed into our home asking questions of us – who we were, what we were doing, how long we lived there, and more. When the police finally left, we proceeded to address this issue with Mayor Berry, Police Chief Schultz and the Police Oversight Commission. We had no response. Finally, we contacted the Department of Justice and had the opportunity to work Damon Martinez. Immediately, we appreciated his concern about our APD experience. Throughout Damon’s tenure as U.S. Attorney, we attended community advocate meetings where for the first time, community members, families, organizations were given a voice at the table. The task before the Department of Justice to reform APD was immense, but Damon was resolute. He attended each meeting, listening to the community and

building coalitions to tackle this issue head on. **Anyone who claims that Damon Martinez has done anything less than be an advocate for our community has nefarious, politically motivated intentions.** Damon opened up lines of communication with our community, and for that we are forever grateful.”

BACKGROUND

As U.S. Attorney, Damon Martinez made reforming the Albuquerque Police Department a top priority. Just weeks into his tenure, he introduced the findings of the Department of Justice's investigation into excessive force. Damon held senior leadership at APD accountable and put in place reforms that led to dramatic decline in the number of police killings.

Read more: “[Feds will seek consent decree spelling out major reforms](#),” Albuquerque Journal, Gallagher, Mike, 4/2014

Read more: “[APD shootings lowest in six years](#)”, Albuquerque Journal; Boetel, Ryan 01/14/2017

Additionally, in the [Albuquerque Journal endorsement of Damon Martinez](#), the Editorial Board specifically took note of his work on the matter of police violence, saying:

“[Damon Martinez] led the local U.S. Attorney’s Office during the Department of Justice’s investigation and settlement agreement with the city of Albuquerque over the city police department’s use of force, including numerous deadly shootings. The DOJ found APD had a pattern of excessive force and the department is in the midst of a years-long reform effort that is being overseen by a federal judge.

Taking on APD ... couldn’t have been easy, and it certainly didn’t win him any popularity contests. Martinez did it anyway because he felt it was the right thing to do.”

Mr. Martinez is a 10th generation New Mexican appointed U.S. Attorney by then-President Obama in 2014. He was fired by President Trump on March 10, 2017. Prior to his almost 16 years of service with the Department of Justice, Damon Martinez served as Legislative Assistant for Senator Jeff Bingaman (who has endorsed him) and Legislative Director for (then) Congressman Tom Udall.

Damon is running for the open Congressional seat in the NM-01, which is being vacated by Michelle Lujan Grisham, who is running for Governor. The primary election will be held on June 5, 2018. The most recent poll conducted by the Albuquerque Journal had Damon Martinez in the lead.

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