

New Mexico senator champions bill for domestic violence victims

NMSU receives grant monies from Department of Justice

By Jenna Candelaria

News Reporter

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New Mexico State University will soon receive a \$350,000 grant to combat domestic violence, thanks to a New Mexico senator.

The grant, from the Department of Justice, is an initiative of Senator Tom Udall, who is serving his first term in the U.S. Senate.

"Domestic violence remains a serious problem in New Mexico," Udall said in a press release about the grant. "This new funding will help give victims of these despicable acts the support they need and help keep New Mexico families safe."

The funds will be used to enhance the safety of child, teen and adult victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking by supporting projects that are uniquely designed to address and prevent these crimes.

Education major Maria Ration said NMSU is lucky to have programs such as the Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education program, which works to make students aware of such things as relationship violence.

"This is not something students get a great deal of news on," Ration said.

WAVE Community Organizer John Rivers said domestic violence is a big issue across the country.

"Things that address domestic violence, like Udall's grant, are huge assets to community awareness," Rivers said.

One program that is expected to receive funding is the Take Back the Night rally usually held in April, which is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Rivers said WAVE will also host a White Ribbon Week in early November to raise awareness for personal violence.

"These programs are about encouraging people to speak out and give them a voice on the issue," Rivers said.

Rivers said legislation addressing domestic violence should be more focused on college students.

“People think of college students and may not think of potentially abusive relationships,” Rivers said. “But it can happen at any age.”

Approximately two out of every 100,000 women are killed yearly in New Mexico, ranking the state seventh in the nation in number of women killed by men each year according to a report by the Violence Policy Center in Washington D.C. The national average is about one woman killed per 100,000.

Any student interested in volunteering with WAVE may contact 646-2813.

Jenna Candelaria is a news reporter and can be reached at trunews@nmsu.edu.