

Criminal cases plummet under District Attorney, Michael Renteria.
Frost McGahey, Investigative Journalist

Michael Renteria was elected as District Attorney for the 6th Judicial District in 2020. No Republican ran against him. In the Democrat primary Norman Wheeler, then assistant DA, was his only opponent.

In 2023 Michael Renteria's office tried only 6 criminal cases with 40 employees. Using pre-Covid 2019 in comparison, 27 criminal cases were tried along with 5 civil cases using a staff of only 34 people.

While having a larger staff, Renteria's reduced filing of criminal cases in the last three years has had a harmful effect on Grant County. This effect is outlined in a letter from the Silver City Police Officers' Association (SCPOA):

"In 2020, fentanyl began to dominate the drug trade in our area. SCPOA members have responded to numerous overdoses, some of which were fatal. SCPOA members have experienced first-hand the devastation of grieving mothers and fathers who have lost their loved ones to fentanyl.

SCPOA members have also responded to a never-ending stream of crime scenes in which our citizen's property has been stolen, homes and businesses burglarized, vehicles stolen and violent crimes, all a result of fentanyl and methamphetamine. Meanwhile drug traffickers operate with apparent impunity and continue to kill our citizens with their deadly drug for five dollars per dose. SCPOA members diligently and routinely build cases and arrest those criminals, only for them to be quickly released back onto our streets to victimize more citizens.

District Attorney Michael Renteria has attempted to shift all the blame of the "catch and release" system onto our local judges, the NM Legislature, and law enforcement. The members of the Silver City Police Officers Assn. are not fooled by this, and know that there are tools in the District Attorney's hands that would at times allow for these criminals to be kept in custody instead of being quickly released.

Renteria has failed SCPOA members and the community by allowing weak plea deals to become the standard. Local law enforcement has utilized our Federal Law Enforcement partners on a scale never before seen because of the soft on crime approach of the current District Attorney."

This statement is from an endorsement for Norman Wheeler who will be running against Renteria in November as a Republican.