

New Mexico Fraud Bill Would Allow Judges to Aggregate Claims

By: Claims Journal staffer

The New Mexico Senate has passed a bill giving judges authority to aggregate the dollar amount of false insurance claims to determine the penalty before sentencing a fraudster. Judges can impose harsher sentences by combining into one lump sum the stolen money from several frauds for which a cheater is convicted.

"SB 33 clearly is in the mainstream of how the states look at insurance fraud crimes specifically," the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud said in support of the legislation.

SB 33 tracks the concepts of the Coalition's model insurance fraud law. The Coalition believes it is important to understand the total loss due to insurance fraud before determining the penalty.

"Fraud rings and other organized groups committing insurance fraud usually target several entities, and unless the totality of the activity is considered, the penalty might be a fraction compared to the total fraud," it said. "This legislation is intended to close that loophole in New Mexico and we strongly support its passage."

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**Coalition Against
Insurance Fraud**