



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

For immediate release
12/08/03

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Governor Bill Richardson orders state flags to be lowered To half-staff in honor of Joe Skeen

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today signed the following executive order, lowering state flags to half-staff in honor of the late U.S. Representative Joe Skeen:

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2003-051

WHEREAS, Representative Joe Skeen from Roswell dedicated his life to his family, public service, and the farming and ranching communities, and through his leadership inspired people of all ages and walks of life;

WHEREAS, Representative Skeen was a vintage New Mexican. He loved the land and represented New Mexico's rural lifestyle with great skill. As a Congressman, he defended the State's border interests with incredible effectiveness. He has truly been a giant in New Mexico's political history.

WHEREAS, Representative Skeen was first elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1980 as a write-in candidate and then served for 11 terms, making him New Mexico's longest-serving House member. He had previously served in the New Mexico State Senate between 1960-1970 and was a candidate for Governor in 1974 and 1978;

WHEREAS, Representative Skeen was a staunch defender of private property rights and a smaller federal government. He served as chairman of the House Interior Appropriations, which sets the budget for national parks, federal land agencies and government Indian programs;

WHEREAS, Representative Skeen was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1997 and retired from political service in 2002. In February 1999, along with Representative Tom Udall and others, Skeen

founded the Congressional Working Group on Parkinson's Disease, a group aimed at increasing awareness among Members of Congress on issues relating to the disease; and

WHEREAS, Representative Skeen was a devoted husband and father who is survived by his wife, Mary, his children Mikell and Elisa and three grandchildren.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, by virtue of the authority vested in the Governor, do hereby order that all flags be flown at half-staff from Monday, December 8, 2003, through sundown on Sunday, December 14, 2003, in mourning and in honor of Representative Joe Skeen. The thoughts and prayers of the people of New Mexico go out to the family of Representative Joe Skeen as well as a heartfelt thank you for his public service.

ATTEST:

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
THIS 8th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2003

REBECCA VIGIL-GIRON
SECRETARY OF STATE

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR