

March 5, 2008

SENATE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 48

The Honorable Timothy Z. Jennings
President Pro Tempore
New Mexico Senate
State Capitol Building
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear President Pro Tempore Jennings and Members of the Senate:

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of New Mexico, Article IV, Section 22, I hereby VETO and return SENATE BILL 349, as amended, which was enacted during the Forty-Eighth Legislature, Second Session, 2008.

Senate Bill 349 has as its laudable purpose the creation of a Veterans Museum Division within the Cultural Affairs Department and the establishment of a state New Mexico Veteran's Museum. I agree with the Legislature that New Mexico's rich military history and tradition warrants such a museum. We should make every effort to honor and remember our veterans and their commendable service to this country.

I object to this bill primarily because it specifically designates the location of the museum in Doña Ana County, whereas I feel veterans throughout the state should be given the opportunity to provide their input as to the most desirable location for such a museum. Indeed, as John Garcia, the Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Veterans' Services stated to me, we have heard from veterans in every corner of the state who have voiced concerns about designating a location for a veterans' museum without a comprehensive review of input from the veteran community. Department of Cultural Affairs Cabinet Secretary Stuart Ashman also has noted that it is highly unusual for legislation to dictate the location of a state museum, a determination generally made by the Department of Cultural Affairs after extensive review of a number of relevant criteria. For these reasons, Mr. Garcia and Mr. Ashman have recommended that I veto this bill in its present form, and I agree.

We will not lose sight of the overall intent of this legislation, however. I intend to convene a task force, including veterans from around the state, to fully consider a review of historic location, visitor analysis, constituent support, and demonstrated need before recommending the most appropriate site for a veterans' museum. The museum, veterans, and all New Mexicans will benefit from further deliberation as to the best place for a museum that will honor our veterans and military history.

Accordingly, signature of this bill is not appropriate at this time.

Respectfully yours,

Bill Richardson
Governor

RECEIVED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR:

Time: _____ a.m. /p.m. By: _____
Date: _____ 2008 Chief Clerk of the Senate

Time: _____ a.m. /p.m. By: _____
Date: _____ 2008 Secretary of State