



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Additional 15 Days **National Guard Leave**

Santa Fe- Governor Bill Richardson made the following remarks at a news conference today:

“Earlier this month, I helped send off 59 members of the 515th Corps Support Battalion of the New Mexico National Guard as they prepared to train for duty in Iraq.

Since then, the President has mobilized nearly 200 members of the 642nd Maintenance Company based in Las Cruces and the 1115th Transportation Company based in Taos.

Soon, we’ll have nearly 800 National Guardsmen and women from New Mexico serving abroad - in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan.

With that in mind, I have authorized an additional 15 days of paid military leave for state government employees who are members of the National Guard mobilized by the President in support of operations overseas and in defense of our nation.

That means these brave soldiers will get some extra time - before deployment, or after they return to New Mexico, for extra training, or just to spend time with their families. This is important because most members mobilized have already utilized their 15 days of military leave.

This policy is basically an extension of a similar one I authorized earlier this year at the start of the war in Iraq.

The Guard and Reservists are making great personal sacrifices to serve our country. I understand that, and I want them to know that the State of New Mexico appreciates what they are about to do.

In addition to this benefit for state employees, I introduced legislation, which was passed and signed into law, which assists the men and women who are being activated and deployed to defend our country. That legislation allows for:

- An extension of the date for active duty National Guard personnel to file New Mexico taxes.
- A grace period of 30 days upon return for expired drivers' licenses.
- A tuition refund or credit for guardsmen currently enrolled in an institution of higher education.
- Free hunting and fishing licenses for one year when they return to New Mexico.
- And free tuition to a New Mexico public university for the children of a New Mexico Guardsman killed in the line of duty.

Next week, the 642nd and 1115th companies will leave for Fort Hood. I want them to know that I value their service.”

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