

State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

For immediate release
6/13/03

Contact: Gilbert Gallegos
505.476.2217

GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON WELCOMES ENDORSEMENTS FROM KEY SCHOOL AND BUSINESS GROUPS

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson welcomed news that key school and business groups have endorsed both education-reform initiatives on the ballot for a special school election scheduled for Sept. 23.

The Association of Commerce and Industry’s Board of Directors voted 52-4 Thursday to support both education initiatives. Governor Richardson had met with ACI leaders to ask for their support during their meeting in Ruidoso on Thursday.

“The vote today by ACI’s board of directors is a strong signal that ACI is reiterating its commitment helping solve the number one problem in the state – improving our education system,” said J.D. Bullington, vice president of government affairs for ACI.

“The ACI board members are business leaders who know how to read the bottom line, and after looking at all of the fiscal data and projections, there was consensus that this funding plan is a viable way to go.”

Governor Bill Richardson said support from ACI and other important business and school groups is evidence of the broad desire to reform New Mexico’s public schools.

“I’ve personally gone to ACI and other groups to ask them to support and endorse both amendments,” Governor Bill Richardson. “I am convinced that we need both measures – strong accountability and sufficient resources – to achieve real school reform. You can’t pass one without the other – and still expect better results from an entrenched bureaucracy that naturally resists change.”

One proposal would strengthen accountability by creating a Secretary of Education who will answer directly to the governor. The second proposal would increase the distribution of money from the Permanent School Fund that goes to classrooms.

Last week, the New Mexico School Boards Association voted to endorse both school-reform initiatives.

“Student achievement is the mission and highest priority of local school boards,” said Randy Manning, president of the New Mexico School Boards Association. “Because Governor Richardson has committed his office and the Secretary of Education to work directly with local elected school boards to accomplish greater results in education, the New Mexico School Boards Association has endorsed these constitutional amendments.”

In addition to ACI, the New Mexico School Boards Association and hundreds of individual parents and teachers who have also endorsed both school-reform proposals, the amendments have also been endorsed by U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, former Governor Garrey Carruthers, former U.S. Congressman Manuel Lujan and former state Republican Party Chairman Edward Lujan.

The following organizations have also endorsed the two amendments:

- Both statewide education associations
- New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators
- Association of College Presidents
- New Mexico Superintendents Association
- Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce
- Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
- Hobbs Chamber of Commerce
- Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Forum
- New Mexico Retail Association
- Independent Insurance Agents
- Strengthening Quality in Schools
- Governor’s Business Executives for Education