



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson

Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson names task force To study election reform

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today announced the formation of a task force that will recommend ways to improve New Mexico’s elections process.

Governor Bill Richardson delivered the following remarks during a news conference:

We were reminded during the recent special education election that New Mexico’s election system is prone to human error and delays in ballot-counting – long delays.

Some say that’s a fact of life with close elections. But I believe we can do better.

With that in mind, the Secretary of State and I are appointing a bipartisan elections task force to review election laws and procedures and recommend changes we can pursue during the next legislative session in January.

I’d like the task force, which I will co-chair along with the Secretary of State, to focus on two areas:

- One, ensuring accurate results in a timely manner
- Second, providing more efficient reporting of campaign finance information

We can improve the elections process to produce quicker results. But more important, we can also build some safeguards into the process to ensure reliability.

We should not be waiting for days – sometimes weeks – to obtain accurate vote counts. These delays and errors breed mistrust in our democratic process. Voters deserve better.

Our election officers and county clerks work hard with limited resources. We need to develop uniform procedures to guide our election process.

I want to emphasize that this is not a partisan issue, which is why we appointed both Democrats and Republicans – with plenty of experience in election law -- to serve on this task force.

We have important elections coming up next year. We need to move quickly to make necessary changes before the June 2004 primary.



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I also want to improve on our system of reporting campaign contributions. We took a good first step during this year's legislative session by passing a law requiring candidates to file reports electronically. But we must go further.

I want the task force to research best practices in other states. The public deserves to know – in an efficient manner – who is contributing to campaigns, and how campaigns are spending that money.

I know I'm asking a lot. But if we work together, we can reform the elections process and regain voters' confidence.

Governor Richardson and Secretary of State Vigil-Giron appointed the members of the Elections Task Force:

Governor Stuart Paisano, Sandia Pueblo
Jim Noel, Attorney
Hoyt Clifton, Office of the Secretary of State
Marilyn Morgan, League of Women Voters
Representative Ed Sandoval
Representative Kandy Cordova
Senator Dianna Duran
Pat Chappelle, Chief Deputy County Clerk, Lea County
David Duhigg, Attorney
Senator Diane Snyder
Senator Rod Adair
Senator Linda Lopez
Tina Gallegos, Valencia County Clerk
Lori Martinez, Attorney
Johnny R. Thompson, Navajo Election Administration
James Lewis, City of Albuquerque
Jamie Diaz, Office of Bernalillo County Clerk
Joe Goldberg, Attorney
Eli Il Yong Lee, Small Business Owner
John Daniel