



DGA News

Democratic Governors' Association news release

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Gov. Edward G.
Rendell
Finance Chair

Gov. Bill
Richardson
Federal Liaison

BJ Thornberry
Executive Director

DGA Announces 2004 Leadership Team

Diverse Group of Govs Will Take National Role in Governing and Elections

Washington, DC – The Democratic Governors' Association (DGA) will be led by a diverse, accomplished team of governors for the 2004 calendar year.

“To revive our ailing economy and to meet - rather than short-change - our responsibilities to educate and protect all Americans, our country needs strong executive leaders. From Washington State to Maine, Democratic governors are answering this call. We are enacting and funding policies that create hope and opportunity for the next generation of young people. We are honoring seniors and families by meeting the responsibility of providing quality health care in difficult economic times. We are working to stop the tide of national job losses in our states and to offer working adults a sense of restored economic security,” **DGA Chair and Iowa Governor Thomas J. Vilsack** said today.

“2004 will bring a fast-paced year of campaigning and opportunities for discussions about the right policies to move our country forward. We’ve assembled an all-star line-up of governors to represent Democratic governors nationally and we are all committed to hitting the ground running,” Vilsack added.

The 2004 Democratic Governors' Association Leadership Team

From the Hawkeye State...

2004 Chair, Iowa Governor Thomas J. Vilsack

Elected by a unanimous vote from his peers, Iowa Governor Thomas J. Vilsack will serve as the 2004 DGA Chair. In 1998, Vilsack beat the odds and stunned the pundits with a come from behind election victory. His first win ended a 30 year stretch of Republican control of Iowa's governor's mansion and Vilsack was then re-elected to a second term in 2002. In office, Vilsack has applied his signature innovative thinking and sophisticated policy know-how to the project of uplifting Iowa's economy and continuing Iowa's tradition of excellence in education. He has worked to make Iowa a national leader in children's health care coverage, with 94% of all Iowa children having health insurance. The state has been able to reduce class sizes in the early grades of elementary school for three years in a row. As a result, Iowa's fourth-graders have placed among the best in the nation in math and science progress, and reversed a ten-year decline in reading test scores. Governor Vilsack also brings his considerable political experience, both from his own elections and from his leadership role with the Iowa presidential caucuses, to the job of chairing DGA.

As DGA Chair, Governor Vilsack will collaborate with elected officials across the country and leading policy think tanks to promote and further develop the innovative policies of

Democratic governors, and as Chair, Governor Vilsack will play a major role in recruiting and supporting Democratic candidates for governor.

From the Land of Enchantment...

2004 Vice Chair, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson

Elected in 2002 by the largest margin of any candidate since 1964, Bill Richardson is New Mexico's governor and already one of the country's most accomplished public servants. Under his stewardship, New Mexico has become one of the fastest growing economies in the country. During the economic downcast of the past year, the state not only steered clear of running a deficit, New Mexico ran a surplus plentiful enough that Gov. Richardson was able to provide a tax cut to residents. Richardson has been a strong advocate for more adequate federal funding for state homeland security, first responders, equipment and training. Governor Richardson is a top, go-to expert on international affairs and energy policy. The Governor is also an energized advocate for Hispanic Americans and this year delivered the first ever Spanish language response the State of the Union address.

As DGA Vice Chair, Governor Richardson will play an active role in all policy lobbying and campaign activities for Democratic Governors on the national stage.

From the Sunflower State...

2004 Vice Chair for Policy, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius

Although she already touts an impressive career in public service, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius is still widely considered one of the political world's most impressive rising stars. Sebelius' first year as Governor has been marked by skilled bipartisan relationship building, and strong economic stewardship. She has fought hard to strengthen the economy both by protecting education and encouraging economic development and growth. In her first year serving as Governor, she balanced the budget and protected education without a tax increase, something that many said could not be done. Before being elected Governor in 2002, Sebelius served in the Kansas House of Representatives from 1987 to 1994, and as Kansas' Insurance Commissioner from 1994 to 2002. Governor Sebelius is the nation's first daughter of a Governor to be elected to the same position.

As Vice Chair for Policy, Governor Sebelius will work closely with her colleagues to promote the successful and innovative education, job creation, and health care policies being enacted by Democratic governors across the country.

From the Keystone State...

2004 Finance Chair, Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell

Hailed as "America's Mayor" by former Vice President Al Gore, Ed Rendell now serves as Governor of the great Keystone State. Governor Rendell is applying his get-it-done governing approach to uplifting Pennsylvania's economy. Soon after his inauguration, Rendell proposed The Plan for a New Pennsylvania. After a hard fought battle with a Republican controlled state legislature, Governor Rendell's far-reaching education reform package passed the Legislature with its first installment of funding a stunning \$258 million in new resources for Pennsylvania's students over the next 18 months. For the first time in Pennsylvania's history, this package codifies and funds full- day kindergarten, pre-k programs, and class size reduction as eligible for state support. The Plan for a New Pennsylvania also reduced the cost of running the state Government by nearly \$300 million in the first year, extending state prescription drug benefits to 100,000 additional seniors, and set

the stage for a \$2 billion economic stimulus program that the administration projects will pump \$6 billion into the state's economy.

As DGA Finance Chair, Governor Rendell will showcase Democratic candidates for governor to financial supporters across the country.

From the Great Lakes State...

2004 Federal Liaison, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm

Just one year after being elected Governor, Jennifer Granholm has made her mark as one of the country's most articulate, talented executive leaders. Faced with a daunting budget crisis and trickle down manufacturing industry job losses from her first days in office, Governor Granholm has waged a sophisticated, untiring campaign to restructure Michigan's budget and create job opportunities. In addition to resolving a \$3 billion budget deficit, Governor Granholm convened a Manufacturing Matters Summit of business and labor leaders and moved quickly to sign legislation into law reauthorizing one of the state's top economic development programs to spur job growth in the state. Granholm is the first female to be elected Governor in Michigan's 167-year history. Before being elected Governor, Granholm served as Michigan's Attorney General.

As DGA's Federal Liaison, Governor Granholm will work with leaders on Capitol Hill and in the Administration to convey the opinions of Democratic governors on major federal policies, like "No Child Left Behind" and homeland security funding.

From the Grand Canyon State...

2004 Recruitment Chair, Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano

An energetic, accomplished public servant, Janet Napolitano is the Governor of Arizona. Napolitano was elected Governor in 2002 after building a reputation in the state as a loyal advocate for seniors, women, children, and consumers. Before being elected Governor, she served as Arizona's Attorney General and U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona. Napolitano has had an extraordinary first year in office: she balanced a \$1.3 billion deficit without raising taxes or making any cuts to education or other vital services. She also established a prescription drug discount program for all Medicare-eligible Arizonans, which is being emulated by other states. And she has proven herself to be a capable leader in times of crisis, as she won acclaim for her steady leadership during summer megafires, a gasoline shortage and the longest prison standoff in American history.

As DGA Recruitment Chair, Napolitano will identify and encourage talented Democratic individuals to consider running for Governor.

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