



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

### **Governor Bill Richardson Threatens to Call Special Session**

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SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson late today challenged Legislators to complete their work, or face a special session.

The Governor made the following remarks during an early evening news conference at the Capitol:

“This session began on January 20. We have less than 48 hours left. I am saying in the clearest terms that if the Senate does not complete its work, if it does not act on the Food and Medical tax cut bill, I am fully prepared to call a Special Session.

I am deeply disturbed at the Senate and its lack of action in the face of pressing needs facing New Mexico.

The House passed the Food and Medical Tax Cut Bill two days ago and the Senate was poised to do the same-but obstructionist tactics and partisan politics have taken hold. Rather than pass a historic and fiscally responsible bill to eliminate the tax on food and cut the tax on medical services to retain our medical professionals, members of the Senate have chosen to pursue stall tactics and procedural stunts to kill this bill.

Some legislators, opponents of change and Republicans driven more by partisan politics than the good of the state, want to kill this bill-which provides working New Mexicans with real tax relief. It eliminates the tax on food-the number one necessity for every family-and takes a major step toward retaining our Doctors and health professionals. Republicans, who refused to support responsible ways to finance Medicaid-which

protects our poorest and most vulnerable citizens-are now claiming they oppose this bill because it will hurt the poor. This is political cynicism at its worst.

This bill helps the poor, it helps the middle class and it is fiscally responsible-it keeps the budget balanced. It is revenue neutral-protecting critical funding for programs such as health care and education. Every New Mexican citizen ought to be outraged that the forces of gridlock-the opponents of change would rather score a political victory over me-than provide real tax relief to New Mexican families

Well, I am here to tell you-that I will not tolerate the return of gridlock and inaction to Santa Fe. The Legislature has been here since January 20<sup>th</sup> and I have exactly 13 bills in my office ready to review. 13 bills on my desk out of over twelve hundred bills introduced. What have they been doing? This is totally unacceptable.

Yes-I have received a budget-and a few revenue bills-but so much remains undone-A DWI package, a complete health care package, education legislation mandated by the vote last fall. We have work to do and I want to see it get done.

And now-some members want to shut down the Senate-using delay and stall tactics-to kill the legislation New Mexicans want the most.

I am here to say-that if the full Senate does not hear and consider a fiscally responsible food and medical tax cut measure, I will call them back into Special Session. If they do not do the hard work in the next three days to pass DWI legislation, health care reform, education reform, economic growth and tax incentives, I will call them back into a special Session to complete the important work of the New Mexico people.”

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