



## **State of New Mexico Office of the Governor**

### **Lt. Governor Diane Denish Signs Bills Aimed at Cracking Down on Production of Methamphetamine, and Strengthening Penalties for Producing Meth with Children Present**

For Immediate Release

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SANTA FE- Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish today signed legislation restricting access to the chemicals required to produce methamphetamine, commonly referred to as “meth”, and toughening penalties for offenders who produce meth with children present.

“By signing these two important measures, we are saying New Mexico will no longer be a haven for meth users and producers. We are taking a stand to protect our children and families from the menace of methamphetamines,” said Lt. Governor Denish. “I would like to acknowledge Governor Richardson for recognizing the gravity of this problem and making it a priority for this administration.”

The first bills signed by the Lt. Governor amend the Drug Precursor Act, giving the state Board of Pharmacy the authority to regulate over the counter drugs and chemicals used to make meth. This is designed to restrict the use of these substances for illegal purposes and requires training for store clerks and businesses that sell such chemicals. The laws make the penalty for violation of the drug precursor act a fourth degree felony.

Lt. Governor Denish also signed bills making it easier to charge an offender with child abuse if a child is negligently or intentionally placed in an environment where there are the chemicals and equipment used to produce meth.

“The saddest trend in the growth of the meth problem is the children who are often exposed to the horrors of these labs,” the Lt. Governor said. “State Police tell us they find children present in 30 to 35-percent of all of their meth lab investigations. This is not acceptable.”

The bills were sponsored in the House by Representative Tom Swisstack (D-Rio Rancho), and in the Senate by Senator Richard Romero (D-Albuquerque).

Lt. Governor Denish signed the bills in her capacity as Acting Governor. Governor Richardson was in New York City being recognized by a national environmental group, and meeting with NBA Commissioner David Stern to discuss holding NBA exhibition games in New Mexico.

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