



Governor Bill Richardson Praises NM Supreme Court Ruling Upholding Tougher DWI Penalties

Ruling overturns Appeals Court decision and reinstates Governor's DWI law passed in 2003

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Contact: Pahl Shipley
505.476.2202

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today praised a ruling by the New Mexico Supreme Court that reversed a ruling by the State Court of Appeals and reinstated increased penalties for repeat DWI offenders passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. The Governor filed a "friend of the court" brief with the Legislature in this case.

"I am gratified the Supreme Court agreed the news laws were properly enacted and the signing order did not nullify the clear intentions of the Executive and Legislature," said Governor Richardson. "The challenge to the law was another attempt by repeat DWI offenders to find a loophole in the law and avoid facing the tougher penalties for their crimes. If you drive drunk in New Mexico, especially if you injure or kill someone while driving drunk, you will face the full force of the law."

During the 2003 and 2004 legislative sessions, Governor Richardson saw the passage of several of his initiatives strengthening New Mexico's DWI laws, and increasing the penalties for selling or providing alcohol to minors. The Governor is currently working with members of the legislature to study new ways to utilize ignition interlock devices, further strengthen DWI penalties, and develop new treatment and intervention strategies for alcohol and drug abuse.

