



Governor Bill Richardson address gambling issues

*Governor Richardson Signs Three gambling Bills and Vetoes Two Others;
establishes task force to address problem gambling*

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SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today addressed a number of gambling issues in an effort to get a handle on problem gambling and place reasonable limits on casinos that discourage abuse.

“I want to bring finality to the gambling landscape in New Mexico,” Governor Bill Richardson said today, after taking action on several gambling bills. “Legalized gambling has benefited many communities, including tribes and pueblos, which have been able to create jobs and provide much-needed social services for New Mexicans. But I believe unlimited gambling in the state is not good policy, and I want to limit the negative effects.

“The action I am taking today represents a balanced approach to gambling - ensuring that the industry, both tribal and non-tribal, is able to prosper in a healthy economic market, while ensuring the general welfare of the state. I want to encourage and establish limits to ensure the highest standards for the gambling industry.”

Governor Richardson vetoed two gambling bills, including one **(SB 384)** that would have allowed more leeway by the Gaming Control Board to award a gaming license to an applicant who was denied a license in another state. He also vetoed a bill **(SB 973)** that would have changed the types of permissible lottery games.

Governor Richardson also took a strong stand to protect New Mexicans who are vulnerable to problem gambling. The Governor secured written commitments from every racetrack owner in New Mexico that they would not engage in the practice of account wagering, that they would be subject to the oversight of the Department of Health regarding their compulsive gambling plans, as well as the establishment of a fund with

the Department of Health for that purpose, that their compulsive gambling plans and expenditures would continue to be open to public inspection, and finally, they pledged their support for any recommendations made by the Governor's task force and the compulsive gambling study to help compulsive gamblers.

The Governor today named the members of his newly established task force on compulsive gambling. The task force will provide recommendations to the Governor for improving the state's approach to compulsive gambling issues. The Governor also signed a bill (**HB 684**), which requires the Health Department to conduct studies about problems associated with gambling.

The Governor also signed (**SB 837**), which increases the hours of gambling allowed at horse race tracks as well as their tax revenue to the state. And he signed (**SB 370**), which transfers the regulation of bingo and raffle to the Gaming Control Board.

Task force members are expected to include:

- Secretary of Health Michelle Lujan Grisham or her designee Karen Meador who is Division Director of the Behavioral Health Services Division;
- The Governor's Health Policy Advisor Michelle Welby;
- Gaming Control Board Member Don Dutton;
- Members of the legislature invited to participate include Representative Kandy Cordova, Senator Steve Komadina, and Representative Larry Larranaga;
- Jeff Jojola - President - Responsible Gaming Association of NM and tribal representative
- Harold Payne - Representative of the gaming industry;
- John Russo, M.D. - Psychiatrist - Behavioral Health Consultant;
- Michael Bogenschutz, M.D. Psychiatrist and Addiction Specialist, Director UNM Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs; and
- Kay Linde Grotbeck - advocate

"I am pleased with the cooperation of all parties who are stakeholders in the gaming industry and their willingness to come to the table to offer meaningful solutions for addictive gamblers," Governor Bill Richardson said.