



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Comprehensive Crime Initiatives for Upcoming Legislative Session

Strong package targets DWI, domestic violence, meth, gangs

ROSWELL- Governor Bill Richardson today announced his comprehensive package of initiatives to combat crime that he plans to introduce during the legislative session that begins next month. The Governor is proposing legislation to address DWI, child abuse, meth, gangs, domestic violence, and identity theft.

“This is a strong package that directly attacks the problems that pose the biggest threat to our families and communities,” said Governor Richardson. “These initiatives will help make our state a safer place for all New Mexicans.”

Here are the key points of Governor Richardson’s anti-crime package:

DWI

The Governor is proposing to allocate funding for eligible New Mexico counties who want to make the commitment to get tougher on DWI. The funding will go to those counties who implement the successful program taking place in San Juan County that sentences first time offenders to 28 days of incarceration *combined with* treatment. The studies clearly show that incarceration combined with treatment in this way reduces the number of repeat offenders.

Keeping our children safe

The Governor has declared that 2006 in New Mexico will be the “**Year of the Child**”. The state will be putting unprecedented resources into protecting and helping our children live healthy, successful lives, and especially, keeping them safe.

Governor Richardson is proposing the creation of a special designation for the most heinous sex crimes against our children. The proposal includes a penalty of life in prison *without* the possibility of parole, even for a first time offender in special circumstances. We must continue to send the message that if you hurt our children, you will pay the price.

The Governor is also proposing that lifetime parole be required for the most vicious sexual predators. The goal is that these individuals- the worst of the worst – always remain under the watchful eyes of the state.

Methamphetamine is the number one drug problem in the nation, and threatens New Mexico’s youth in many ways. We have made some progress- this year we have seen a decline in the number of deaths from meth use, we restricted access to the critical ingredients for its manufacture, we have increased the penalties for making meth and we have increased access to treatment. And for those who put their children at risk, we passed a law that says it is now “child abuse” to manufacture meth where children are present. Now Governor Richardson is proposing to:

- Increase the penalty for sale of meth or possession of meth with the intent to sell, to the same criminal level as heroin and cocaine.
- Fix the glitch in our drug free school zones, which at present exclude meth for an enhanced sentence; and
- Create a state wide registry of “meth affected properties” so that home buyers are not unknowingly endangering their families by residing in homes that were previously busted as meth labs.

Gangs continue to be a serious problem in New Mexico, particularly our rural communities. The Governor is planning to re-introduce two important bills designed to reduce the ability of gangs to function. They were introduced in this year’s session but ran out of time:

- The first would enhance the sentences of anyone convicted of crimes committed to further gang activity, such as murder, burglary, or assault, and
- The second would toughen penalties for recruiting minors into gangs.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence affects more than just the immediate family involved in any incidents it impacts all of us, especially children who may witness the abuse. Governor Richardson is proposing several new laws to help the victims of domestic violence and punish offenders:

- The first will provide stronger, mandatory sentences for domestic violence offenders,

- The second would provide an easy mechanism to create a substitute address for victims who fear for their safety.

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