



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

News Release

For Immediate Release
April 4, 2006

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Governor Bill Richardson Urges DA to Pursue Death Penalty for Deputy Murder

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today urged Bernalillo County District Attorney Kari Brandenburg to pursue the death penalty in the case of Michael Paul Astorga, the man police believe shot and killed Bernalillo County Sheriff's Deputy James McGrane, Jr. during a traffic stop March 22.

"I believe that a conviction for this crime - the cold blooded murder of a police officer doing his duty- would call for the ultimate punishment," said Governor Richardson. "In rare situations, the death penalty is the appropriate penalty. This is one of those cases."

Astorga had apparently fled to Juarez, Mexico where early Monday he was arrested by the Chihuahua State Judicial Police. Monday morning Governor Richardson had numerous conversations with high ranking Mexican officials asking for their help in returning Astorga to the United States as quickly as possible. Last evening federal and state officials in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico decided to deport Astorga and early this morning turned him over to U.S. officials at the border in El Paso.

"I am grateful to the Mexican authorities for their cooperation and quick action returning Astorga to the United States," added the Governor.

This morning Governor Richardson called Texas Governor Rick Perry to ask for his help in extraditing Astorga back to New Mexico and had state resources ready to expedite the process. That became unnecessary when Astorga waived extradition.

"The good news is a dangerous fugitive is off the streets. Now the priority is to get him to trial to answer these charges," said the Governor.