



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

For immediate release  
April 20, 2006

Contact: Gilbert Gallegos  
(Santa Fe) 505-476-2217

### **Governor Bill Richardson Forms Bipartisan Task Force to Craft Sweeping Ethics Reform Plan**

*Governor also wants comprehensive campaign-finance reform*

LAS CRUCES - Governor Bill Richardson today announced the creation of a task force that will work immediately to develop a broad package of recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature to reform the state's ethics and campaign-finance laws.

"It is unacceptable that New Mexico does not limit or include any accountability for campaign contributions or gifts to elected officials," Governor Richardson said during a speech today to members of the Southern New Mexico chapter of Common Cause. "I will involve the Legislature in the development of the recommendations. But I also want good-government advocates to help us develop the toughest possible ethics and campaign-finance laws."

The ethics reform task force will be chaired by Suellyn Scarnecchia, Dean of the University of New Mexico Law School and former Governor Garrey Carruthers, the Dean of the New Mexico State University College of Business Administration and Economics.

"Everything is on the table," Governor Richardson said. "I asked Dean Scarnecchia and Dean Carruthers to aggressively pursue new ideas and strengthen what I consider to be very weak laws."

Governor Richardson introduced an anti-corruption package during the 2006 legislative session in response to the allegations of corruption in New Mexico's Treasurer's Office.

The Legislature passed one piece of that package – a law requiring disclosure of campaign contributions when seeking state contracts and banning campaign contributions and any other thing of value from prospective contractors during the contracting process.

The Legislature did not pass other elements of the Governor’s anti-corruption package – including more oversight of the Treasurer’s investments, restrictions on public officials and their families from obtaining uncompetitive contracts, prohibitions on political activities by state employees on government time, enhanced campaign contribution reporting requirements and expressly requiring reporting of independent expenditures made by “527” groups and individuals who are advocating the election or defeat of a candidate.

Following the legislative session, Governor Richardson signed an executive order increasing oversight of the Treasurer’s Office. The order established a code of ethics and conduct for the office, set campaign contribution rules, established a whistleblower program and increased the oversight responsibilities of the State Board of Finance.

The new task force will develop recommendations for the Governor and the Legislature to pursue during the 2007 legislative session. Governor Richardson urged members of Common Cause during today’s speech to get actively involved in developing the ethics reform package and lobbying the Legislature to pass tough, new laws.

“I’m counting on your help,” Governor Richardson said. “Most important, the people of New Mexico are counting on you to help drive this reform and help keep their government open and honest.”