



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Details Anti-Crime Package

Longer sentences for Serious Violent offenders; Stiffer penalties for gun crimes and sex offenders

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today outlined steps he will take to strengthen laws dealing with gun violence and sex offenders. The Governor also plans to beef up the law to ensure that serious violent offenders serve more time in prison.

Serious Violent Offenders

Governor Richardson will push to change a 1999 law that was supposed to limit the amount of "Good Time credit" that serious violent offenders could earn against their sentences. In reality, that same law still allowed certain serious violent offenders to continue to earn additional "good time" through special programs. So while on average these offenders are serving 86 percent of their sentences and many are serving the full 100 percent, some offenders are serving less than the 85 percent of their sentences.

"I find that unacceptable," Governor Richardson said. "While good time credits might be a good management tool to keep non-violent inmates in line while they are behind bars, murderers, sex offenders and other violent felons belong in prison. End of story."

"I have worked hard to increase penalties and ensure that violent offenders are locked safely away from the public. This has been a hallmark of my administration."

Under Governor Richardson, the state has locked up an additional 750 additional inmates in New Mexico's prisons. The number of serious violent offenders in New Mexico's

prisons has more than doubled since 2003. About 800 sex offenders – or 11 percent of the prison population – are behind bars.

Gun Crimes

Governor Richardson will also work to strengthen penalties for crimes involving a firearm. He will propose enhanced penalties for these criminals – from one year to three years for a first offense, and from three years to five years for a repeat offense. That’s on top of the sentence the offender would get for the actual crime they commit.

“I am a strong proponent of responsible ownership and use of firearms,” Governor Richardson said. “But I will not tolerate criminals who use a gun in the commission of a crime. We should throw the book at them.”

Life Sentences for Certain Sex Offenders

The Governor will reintroduce legislation calling for life sentences for certain sex offenders – those offenders who prey on children, or who commit violent sex offenses with the intent to kill their victim. Identical legislation proposed by the Governor this year passed unanimously in the House, but failed to make it through the Senate.

“I will once again push a special designation for the most heinous sex crimes,” Governor Richardson said. “My proposal includes a penalty of life in prison, even for a first time offender in special circumstances, such as criminal sexual penetration on a child under the age of 9.

“We must continue to send the message that if you hurt our children, you will pay the price.”