



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

For Immediate Release
May 16, 2006

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Governor Richardson's Efforts to Help Disabled Take Effect Tomorrow

Parking Fines for Disability Accessible Spaces to Increase on Wednesday, May 17

(Santa Fe, NM) -- As of May 17, 2006 the fine for illegally parking in an accessible parking space designated for people with disabilities will dramatically increase to a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$500 per infraction. These infractions had previously carried fines ranging from a minimum of \$150 to a maximum of \$300.

This change comes as a result of Senate Bill 444 sponsored by Senator Phil Griego and signed by Governor Richardson.

"Access to parking isn't just a convenience for the disability community, it can be a matter of life and death," said Governor Richardson. "This action will help defend the right of mobility for New Mexico's disability population."

Illegal use of accessible parking spaces represents a grave problem for people with disabilities, especially when these spaces are located near medical offices, pharmacies, and other vital businesses. Disability placards are issued by the state to anyone who is unable to walk more than 200 feet without assistance from a cane, walker, wheelchair, oxygen or another person.

"Illegal use of accessible parking spaces is an infringement on the civil rights of people with disabilities," said Mary Keener Beresford, Director Governor's Commission on Disability. "It's much more than just a parking violation."

This action increases penalties for illegal parking in handicapped spaces in New Mexico to the same level as most other states.