



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Signs Governmental Conduct Act, Reinstates Ethics Reform Task Force

(Las Cruces, NM) – Governor Bill Richardson today took two executive actions to help promote ethical government in New Mexico, signing the Governmental Conduct Act (Senate Bill 931) as well as an executive order reestablishing the Governor’s Task Force on Ethics Reform.

The Task Force will again be co-chaired by former Governor Garrey Carruthers and Dean Suellyn Scarnecchia of the University of New Mexico School of Law.

“I wanted much more ethics reform this year,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “I wanted an independent ethics commission, campaign contribution limits, and other initiatives. This task force will help restart the ethics reform process.”

The group will continue to evaluate the options for governmental ethics and campaign finance reform and review the results of the past regular and special legislative sessions. The Task Force will also recommend a timeframe for convening a special session devoted to ethics reform.

Governor Richardson also signed House Bill 823, the Governmental Conduct Act, sponsored by Representative Joseph Cervantes. This bill sets clear limits on gifts to state officials, candidates, and their families as well as provides stricter standards of conduct for state employees and elected officials. The Act also includes judges, who will be held to the same standard as other public officials.

The bill strengthens the state’s conflict of interest laws, allowing for penalties for officials who use their office to promote their own financial interests. It also builds upon

ethics measures already acted upon by Governor Richardson, such as Senate Bill 931 which sets clear limits on gifts to state officials, candidates and their families.

“Public officers and employees must protect the public trust and use their office only to advance the public interest,” Governor Richardson said.

The text of the Governor’s Executive Order follows:

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2007-014

CONTINUATION OF THE GOVERNOR’S TASK FORCE ON ETHICS REFORM

WHEREAS, the citizens of New Mexico have entrusted public officials and employees with operating our government in an open and honest manner;

WHEREAS, it is essential that the public has the utmost confidence in their government and that it works exclusively to advance the best interests of the people of New Mexico;

WHEREAS, in order to earn the public trust, all public officials and employees must conduct themselves with integrity and honesty as they uphold the high responsibilities of public service;

WHEREAS, recent events at the federal and state level make it abundantly clear that strong ethics and campaign finance laws are essential building blocks in forming an effective democratic and representative government;

WHEREAS, the Richardson administration proposed a significant ethics and campaign finance reform package during the 2006 regular legislative session, which unfortunately was largely not enacted;

WHEREAS, the Richardson Administration adopted the majority of the Task Force on Ethics Reform’s recommendations in 2006 and again proposed a significant ethics and campaign finance reform package during the 2007 regular legislative session, which unfortunately only a portion was enacted; and

WHEREAS, bipartisan cooperation is needed to develop a comprehensive approach to reforming New Mexico’s ethics and campaign finance laws, and to ensure that the Legislature takes meaningful action on reform initiatives during the next regular or special legislative session.

NOW THEREFORE, I Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of New

Mexico, do hereby re-establish the **Governor's Task Force on Ethics Reform** as follows:

1. The purpose of the Task Force shall be to continue to study the issues of governmental ethics and campaign finance reform, to evaluate the Task Force's recent experiences during the past regular and special legislative sessions, and to make additional, specific recommendations to the Governor on how best to enact comprehensive ethics reform in the state at future legislative sessions, including providing the Governor advice on the timing of any special session devoted to ethics reform.
2. The Task Force shall consist of no more than twenty (20) members. The Governor shall appoint the membership of the Task Force as follows:
 - a. One Co-chair shall be Suellyn Scarnecchia, Dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law;
 - b. One Co-chair shall be former Governor Garrey Carruthers, Dean of the New Mexico State University College of Business Administration and Economics;
 - c. At least two members shall be representatives of non-profit organizations that have demonstrated a consistent dedication to the principles of open and honest government in New Mexico;
 - d. At least four members shall be legislators in the New Mexico State Legislature;
 - e. At least one member shall be a representative of the business community;
 - f. At least one member shall be a representative of local government;
 - g. At least one member shall be a representative of tribal government;
 - h. Up to four members shall be representatives of the general public;
 - i. One member shall be from the Judicial Standards Commission;
 - j. One member shall be from the Attorney General's Office; and
 - k. One member shall be from the State Treasurer's Office.
3. The Office of the Governor and the State Board of Finance shall provide administrative staff and support to the Task Force.
4. The term of each member shall be from the date of appointment until twenty (20) days after the adjournment of the next regular session of the Legislature in 2008, unless otherwise determined by the Governor.
5. The Task Force shall convene at least monthly or more frequently, as necessary.
6. The Task Force shall consult with both public and private individuals, entities, experts, interim committees, and state agencies as deemed necessary for the

development of its recommendations. Input from the general public in the development of any proposals is strongly encouraged.

7. The Task Force shall prepare and present its recommendations for the Governor's consideration no later than October 31, 2007, unless otherwise directed by the Governor.
8. The Task Force shall be an advisory body that makes recommendations to the Governor and in no event shall it make final decisions regarding policy.
9. Task Force members shall serve voluntarily and shall receive no pay for their services, nor shall they be reimbursed for travel or subsistence expenses, unless otherwise provided by law.

THIS ORDER supersedes any other previous orders, proclamations, or directives in conflict. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until such time as it is rescinded by the Governor.

**ATTEST:
THIS**

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE

6th DAY OF APRIL, 2007

**MARY HERRERA
SEAL
SECRETARY OF STATE**

**WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT
OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

**BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR**

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