



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



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Governor Bill Richardson Statement on NM Democratic Party Presidential Caucus

SANTA FE, NM- New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson today issued the following statement regarding the state's Democratic Presidential caucus.

"I am proud that so many New Mexico Democrats turned out to vote in yesterday's caucus. The unprecedented interest and activism in the primary process shows that New Mexicans take seriously their important role in choosing the next President. Make no mistake, New Mexico's 26 delegates matter greatly."

"That said, I am deeply disturbed by the reports that problems and delays at polling locations may have kept people from voting. As this very close election shows every vote is important, and every vote must count. Anything less is unacceptable. In addition the delay in results was extremely disappointing. I have expressed my frustration to Democratic Party Chairman Brian Colon and I told him that I stand ready to help the party in any way that I can."

"At the same time, I believe that New Mexico voters- Democrats and Republicans alike- must decide whether they want to preserve their early voice in the process in the future, and what form it should take. Whatever the decision, we must pledge to voters that future caucuses and primaries are professionally run, inclusive, and provide accurate, timely results."

The Caucus was conceived by the Governor in 2003 to give New Mexico voters a real voice in the selection of the party nominees--as the state primary elections are in June-- long after nominees traditionally have been chosen. It has been wildly successful as over 100,000 Democrats turned out in the first caucus and 150,000 turned out yesterday. New Mexico Democrats- and Republicans if they choose- now have a real voice in the nomination process.

This is a Democratic Party process--not done at taxpayer expense--run by volunteers and funded by the Democratic Party and its supporters. Democratic voters must recognize that with their new privilege of voting early comes responsibility. If they want a voice in the process-they need to support the Caucus with their time and financial contributions.

In 2004 Governor Richardson--through his personal efforts and those of his organization--ensured a successful first caucus--well organized, well funded, well-executed. This year, his political organization was devoted to his Presidential run and his personal time is now devoted to the Legislature. The New Mexico Democratic Party and New Mexico Democrats were wholly responsible for this caucus in the absence of the Governor's time and his organization. Despite their best efforts, the enormous turnout overwhelmed Party officials in some places.

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