



For immediate release
5/26/03

Contact: Gilbert Gallegos
505.476.2217
(mobile) 412-2644

Governor Bill Richardson and Attorney General Patricia Madrid Oppose U.S. Patriot Act provisions

SANTA FE – New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and Attorney General Patricia Madrid want New Mexico to join the long list of communities that oppose controversial provisions in the U.S. Patriot Act.

Governor Richardson and Attorney General Madrid urged the New Mexico Legislature, which will convene Monday in a special session, to pass a similar resolution opposing many provisions in the Patriot Act.

“It is important, especially now that Congress is evaluating the impact of the Patriot Act, that we send the message that New Mexico opposes the infringement of civil rights and liberties,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “The United States can fight the war against terrorism without eroding America’s precious freedoms.”

"The Patriot Act already allows the government without adequate justification to reach too far into the private lives of Americans," said Attorney General Patricia Madrid. "The Act's invasion of our nation's civil rights and liberties should be curtailed, not expanded. We must always remember that our rights and liberties have been and continue to be paid for with the blood of the men and women of our armed services. We dishonor them if we allow those sacred rights and liberties to be eroded."

Nearly 300 communities across the nation, including several New Mexico cities and counties, have passed anti-Patriot Act resolutions.

Governor Richardson and Attorney General Madrid said they also support new legislation in Congress that would narrow several controversial sections of the Patriot Act. U.S. Rep. Tom Udall is co-sponsoring such a bill in the House and U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman is co-sponsoring a similar bill in the Senate.

The Patriot Act was passed shortly after the September 11th terrorist attacks. The Act contains several controversial provisions that allow for searches with no probable cause; searches of private property without notice to owners until after the fact; wiretaps involving intelligence gathering without probable cause; and the indefinite detention of non-citizens.