



For Immediate Release
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Governor Richardson Fulfills Campaign Promise to Improve Child Support Collections to Benefit Working Families

Collections Surpass \$100 Million and Court Orders Reach All Time High

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson is pleased to report an all time high of \$103.2 million collected in child support during the 2008 budget year. This is an increase of 8.3 percent from collections totaling \$95.3million in 2007 and a 43 percent increase from the \$72.2 million collected when he first took office in 2004.

“I promised the people of New Mexico we would use every available resource to enforce child support orders and increase collections to benefit New Mexico families. I am pleased to report we have surpassed our goals each and every year, and have reached an all time high for both child support collections and percentage of cases with court orders,” said Governor Bill Richardson.

The Governor credited the Human Services Department for their efforts. More than 65 percent of the 58,667 cases handled by the Child Support Enforcement Division now have court orders.

“Surpassing the \$100 million mark in child support collections is a tremendous effort and means more New Mexico families are getting the child support they need and deserve,” said Pamela Hyde, HSD Secretary. “Of course collections don’t happen without court orders, which is why it is so important that we continue to increase the percentage of court-ordered cases.”

Other promises made and kept by Governor Bill Richardson to improve child support collections include:

- An increased cost effectiveness ratio now at more than 2 to 1,
- Stepped up efforts to establish paternity,
- Helping struggling parents get the training and education they need through the New Mexico Works and Education Works programs, and

- Using every available tool to enforce child support orders; wage withholdings, license suspensions, lottery withholdings, passport denials, tax intercepts and the Governor's Fresh Start Program.

“The Governor's Fresh Start Program has been instrumental to improve collections by encouraging non-custodial parents to come in and talk with our staff and together find a way they can settle their child support debt,” said Charissa Saavedra, Child Support Enforcement Division Director.

Last month the Fresh Start Program reached its 1000th case and has collected \$1.4 million since its inception in 2005.

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