

October 30, 2009

Governor Bill Richardson  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501



Dear Governor Richardson,

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the state of New Mexico. Our current fiscal crisis is clearly one of the toughest challenges that our state has faced. We recognize that you are diligently working to find solutions and we applaud your efforts to do so.

We also applaud the Legislature's efforts to address this issue while protecting education, Medicaid, and other critical programs and services from harmful cuts. However, we also believe that a 7.6 percent cut for executive agencies would be very damaging. Cuts this deep would greatly inhibit agencies' ability to fulfill their statutory obligations. We believe there are other means to shore up the budget in the near-term, until a sustainable solution—including revenue enhancements—can be considered in January.

We urge you to line-item veto Section 2.A.(4) of HAFB substitute for HB17 & 33 as amended, eliminating the Legislature's requirement for aggregate agency cuts of 7.6 percent. We would also like to strongly emphasize that the subsequent subsections of paragraph (4) outlining agency and program exemptions must be observed should you consider additional executive action for budget reduction, in lieu of this section of the bill. Certainly we urge you to honor the Legislature's clear intention to hold all Medicaid funding harmless from budget cuts. As you know, we will lose \$5 in Medicaid services in order to save \$1 of state funds. The human cost of making cuts to Medicaid is just too great in these difficult times.

Again, thank you for your leadership during these challenging times. As an alliance of more than 40 faith leaders, small business owners and associations, labor unions, social advocacy groups, and nonprofit organizations we know these challenges well. Better Choices New Mexico believes that it is essential that we take a balanced approach to addressing our state's fiscal crisis. Revenue projections continue to look bleak and we believe the only sustainable solution is to consider all revenue-generating measures.

Please let us know if you have questions or concerns about this request. Representatives from Better Choices New Mexico would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you and discuss our position further.

Sincerely,

Better Choices New Mexico

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry • NM Conference of Churches • American Federation of Teachers—New Mexico • National Education Association—New Mexico • AFSCME • Communications Workers of America—Local 7076 • Center for Civic Policy • SouthWest Organizing Project • Conservation Voters New Mexico • Community Action New Mexico • America Votes Education & Action Fund • New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness • New

Mexico Solutions • New Mexico Youth Providers Alliance • New Mexico Early Childhood Alliance • Families and Youth, Inc. • Family Justice Alliance • New Mexico School Nurses Association • New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence • Planned Parenthood of New Mexico • Hands Across Cultures • Hogares, Inc. • New Mexico Child Care and Education Association • New Mexico Voices for Children

cc: Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish  
Speaker of the House Ben Lujan  
Senate President Pro Tempore Tim Jennings  
Eric Witt, Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff