

March 25, 2009

HOUSE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 7

The Honorable Ben Luján and  
Members of the House of Representatives  
State Capitol Bldg.  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Honorable Speaker Luján and Members of the House:

Pursuant to the Constitution of the State of New Mexico, Article IV, Section 22, I hereby VETO and return HOUSE BILL 237, as amended, which was enacted during the Forty-Ninth Legislature, First Session, 2009.

While I understand the intent of this legislation, I am concerned that the bill would allow school districts to merely publish the notification of the availability of a School District Annual Accountability Report rather than the actual Report as is currently required. These Accountability Reports contain critical information, such as administrative expenses and attendance records, for parents, students, community residents, and local policymakers who are interested in the progress of local school districts. Not publishing the actual Report would narrow the dissemination of information that is needed for comprehensive community scrutiny. Instead, the State should make every effort to provide information in a manner that reaches that most people possible.

Moreover, nothing in House Bill 237 requires school districts to also publish the notification of availability in Spanish, in contrast with the current practice of most school districts which publish the full Report in both English and Spanish. Without specific language requiring notification in Spanish, school districts may not take that next step and also publish the notification in Spanish. Again, I am concerned that important information and data will not be widely disseminated to those who will most directly benefit.

Finally, as you know, New Mexico is largely a rural state with a widely dispersed population. Despite the progress that the State has made, through both Legislative and Executive action, too many citizens either do not have internet access at all or have connectivity issues that make accessing the internet quite difficult. This is especially true for New Mexicans living in rural areas and on Indian reservations. Because there is nothing in this bill that requires a school district to provide an actual hard copy of the Report, there is a possibility that the school district would only make copies available via the internet. Again, the consequence would be a lack of publicly available information.

For these reasons, present law concerning the School District Annual Accountability Report is preferable to that proposed in Senate Bill 237. Therefore, I veto this bill.

Respectfully yours,

Bill Richardson  
Governor

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Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.      by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 2009  
Chief Clerk of the House

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.      by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 2009  
Secretary of State