

# RICHARDSON'S RUN

## THE TRUTH BEHIND CAMPAIGN CLAIMS

Among the claims by Gov. Bill Richardson's campaign that have been challenged by newspapers and independent fact-checkers:

**Jobs created:** Since the very beginning of the campaign, Richardson has bragged that he created 80,000 jobs in New Mexico since he took office as governor. Indeed, nearly that many new jobs have been added during that period. However, experts say the state's economic fortunes are linked in part to the national economy and that Richardson has been lucky to be governor during a boom time for the oil-and-gas economy, which has translated into more jobs.

Meanwhile, a study by the advocacy group New Mexico Voices for Children in September 2006 showed that more than a third of the new jobs projected to be created in New Mexico in the next few years are low-wage jobs.

**Balancing the state budget:** A common brag in Richardson speeches and interviews is that he has balanced the state budget. Actually, New Mexico state government, as is the case in most states, is required by the state constitution to have a balanced budget. Unlike the federal government, the state can't spend more than it expects to receive in revenue. While the Governor's Office proposes a budget, the state Legislature actually passes a budget — subject to the governor's veto power.

**Driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants:** At a candidate debate in Las Vegas, Nev., this month, Richardson said he signed a 2003 law to allow undocumented residents to get driver's licenses as a matter of public safety.

"We wanted more people to be insured. When we started with this program, 33 percent of all New Mexicans were uninsured. Today, it's 11 percent," he said at the debate. He made a similar claim on a Fox News interview a few days before.

However, state officials say it's not the driver's license law that is responsible for the decline of uninsured drivers, but a state program started under the Republican administration of former Gov. Gary Johnson that requires insurance companies to transmit information about drivers electronically to the state Motor Vehicle Division.

**New Mexico following the Kyoto treaty:** Richardson's campaign has claimed that New Mexico is "the only state that follows the Kyoto treaty." Richardson in 2005 did issue

an executive order committing the state to cut greenhouse gases to 2000 levels by 2012, and by a further 10 percent by 2020. But, the Web site said, "... even if the state meets the targets established by the governor, New Mexico will be producing nearly 50 percent more carbon dioxide emissions by 2012 than the Kyoto target for the United States."

Seventeen states have so far established their own targets for reducing carbons emission. A spokeswoman for The Pew Center said New Mexico probably is in the top 10 as far as states cutting carbon emissions.

**Yucca Mountain:** At the Las Vegas debate, Richardson answered a question about a hot-button issue in Nevada — the unpopular Yucca Mountain nuclear waste facility. "All my life, as secretary of energy, as a congressman, I oppose the site, for environmental reasons, water saturation," he said. However, Richardson as a congressman voted in favor of the 1987 measure that designated Yucca Mountain as the sole dump site to be studied by the federal government. And during Richardson's tenure as secretary of the Energy Department, he approved a critical viability assessment.

Asked about his Yucca Mountain record by a *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reporter immediately after the debate, "Richardson flatly denied that he had ever voted Yucca forward or otherwise helped it along."

**Education ranking:** In several campaign speeches and in debates as recently as Nov. 8, Richardson has made the claim "America is 29th in science, to the European Union, to Japan." Sometimes that's coupled with a claim that the U.S. used to be ranked first in these subjects. However, two international studies — including one cited by Richardson — shows American students, especially in earlier age groups, ranking higher than Richardson says. And there's no study that shows the U.S. ever was ranked first in these subjects.

**Roswell UFO cover-up:** Answering a question from MSNBC's Chris Matthews about the alleged Roswell flying saucer crash of 1947, Richardson said, "The federal government has not come clean on all that it knows." The head of the National Archives' Modern Military Records Branch said, "We are unaware of any large collection of UFO records that have not been declassified."

Sources: *The New Mexican*, the Associated Press, Factcheck.org, The Fact Checker ([blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker))

**As a congressman, Bill Richardson voted in favor of Yucca Mountain as the sole nuclear waste dump site to be studied by the government.**