

Census Provides Old News: We're Still Poor

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"The budget deficit is a result of over-spending and mismanagement of the taxpayers' dollars," Republican Susana Martinez has said, without mentioning that the governor's personal income tax cuts account for a big chunk of this spending. She wants to sell the state's jet and slash appointed positions, but she'd need to sell 100 jets and banish 1,000 appointees before she made a dent in the looming deficit.

Democrat Diane Denish's proposed plan, discussed in previous columns, is more concrete but still comes up short. We're not likely to hear anything more honest from either. Politically, Martinez can't say she'd cut Medicaid, and Denish can't say she'd raise taxes. Of the two, Martinez is least prepared by experience or expertise for the kinds of decisions that lie ahead.

We're now getting a preview of things to come. After elementary schools in 22 school districts lost their school breakfast program, the nonprofit New Mexico Appleseed spoke up. Many kids who get a school breakfast didn't eat the night before; about a quarter of New Mexico's children don't know where their next meal will come from. Although studies show that kids who get a school breakfast perform and behave better than their unfed peers, you don't have to be a learned professor to know that hungry kids don't learn.

The breakfast program isn't a luxury, argued Appleseed's Jennifer Ramo. If anything, she said, it should be expanded. Last week the governor found enough change in the stimulus couch to restore the breakfast program. For now.

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All She
Wrote
By Sherry
Robinson





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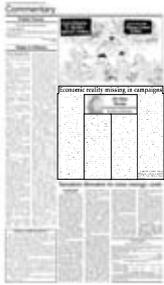
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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Sherry Robinson's column is distributed by New Mexico News Services.)