

Report: Richardson in no campaign hurry

by UPI

SANTA FE, N.M. - New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson says he's "perfectly content to be the only candidate in the second tier" for the 2008 Democratic presidential bid.

Asked by the Los Angeles Times how it feels to barely register on early polls behind frontrunners Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., and Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., the 59-year-old made the "second tier" remark, and claimed he has a better chance than the other underdogs.

Now a governor, the former congressman and ambassador to the United Nations has pushed through a state bill legalizing marijuana use by severely ill people, and said he expected "national grief" over the move in his presidential campaign.

"So what if it's risky? It's the right thing to do," Richardson told the Times. "I don't tailor my style to primary states."

Since he was reelected easily in November, the state has cut taxes, given teachers \$275 million in raises and authorized \$225 million in state money to build a spaceport to attract high-tech jobs.

Even among state Republicans, Richardson commands respect, including from Rep. Dan Foley, GOP whip in the New Mexico House.

"People shouldn't count him out. You won't find a person who works harder," Foley said.

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