

Richardson to seek Dem presidential nod

by UPI

LOS ANGELES -- New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, a former Clinton Cabinet member, announced his candidacy for the Democratic Party nomination for president in Los Angeles.

Richardson, 59, who is of Hispanic ancestry, said Monday he is seeking the nomination "because these times call for a leader with a proven track record."

"I am that person, not because I say so, but because of what I have done, and what I can do for the American people," Richardson told the crowd at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel with his wife, Barbara, at his side.

Richardson served seven terms in Congress before being appointed U.N. ambassador and energy secretary. Currently he is in his second term as governor of New Mexico.

Richardson said it will be up to the next president to repair the damage to the U.S. reputation done by the Bush administration.

In his remarks, Richardson touched on Iraq, healthcare and immigration. He said the only way the situation in Iraq will be resolved is if U.S. troops leave, forcing all sides to come to a political settlement. On healthcare, Richardson said all employers should be required to offer healthcare coverage or pay an equivalent amount to the government to handle it. He also called the immigration proposal now working its way through the Senate "a step in the right direction" but also "a step in the wrong direction because it separates parents from children."

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