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## EDITORIALS

### Lotto Drops Lobbyist; Good Government Wins

The governor can move with an alacrity that defies the notion government is unresponsive and bureaucracies have the reflexes of a slug.

Gov. Bill Richardson killed the state Lottery Authority's \$32,000 contract with a lobbyist just three days after the Journal highlighted a deal that seemed to be aimed at a proposal to expand lottery proceeds earmarked for scholarships.

Veteran lobbyist Ed Mahr had been hired to "assist us through the legislative process," according to lottery CEO Tom Romero. That process included no legislative proposals from the governor-appointed Lottery Authority board — but it did include a proposal from Senate Majority Leader Michael Sanchez, D-Belen, to earmark 30 percent of lotto revenues for scholarships. And with at least 50 percent guaranteed to go to winners, that 30 percent threatens to cut into the lottery's 21-plus percent administrative and operating costs.

Thirty-five states and the District of Columbia spend less to run their operations. Ten other states earmark 30 percent or more for their beneficiaries. In New Mexico, scholarships get around 23 percent of the lottery take, and the program is expected to go bust in 2011 if that formula doesn't change.

Richardson has been in favor of the 30-percent earmark since October. Richardson spokesman Gilbert Gallegos says the governor has "made it clear to the Lottery Authority that he's making the 30 percent provision one of his top priorities for the session" and he "believes more of the money generated by the lottery should go to scholarships and not bureaucracies."

It was clear to Richardson the lobbyist deal didn't pass the scratch-and-sniff test, and he wasted no time doing something about it.

Here's to state lawmakers being just as responsive to constituents' needs and the next 57 days of the Legislature being just as productive.