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August 13, 2004

Head Of Parole Board Removed Over Ex-Priest Parole

The Associated Press

SANTA FE — Gov. Bill Richardson on Friday removed Bob Martinez as director of the state Parole Board over the board's failure to notify victims when a former priest convicted of sexual molestation came up for parole.

Martinez said Thursday his office "screwed up" by not alerting the victims of David Holley, 77, who pleaded guilty in 1993 to sexually molesting eight boys in Alamogordo in the 1970s.

"We misstepped, and there was a very terrible clerical error made," Martinez said.

Richardson said the board's failure to notify the victims violated the state constitution and was a serious breach of public trust.

"As director, Bob Martinez is accountable for the actions of the board and its employees, and this kind of error will not be tolerated," he said. "The public, especially crime victims, must have complete confidence in the system."

The Parole Board did not answer the telephone over the lunch hour Friday.

Holley was paroled May 26 under strict conditions, but the order was later rescinded and he never left prison. Tim Kline, parole board chairman, rescinded Holley's parole and scheduled another hearing Sept. 14.

Holley is serving a 275-year prison term in the geriatric unit of the minimum-security Los Lunas prison.

State law allows victims to submit a written statement or speak to the Parole Board. They also have the right to attend the hearing.

However, Holley's victims were not informed of May's hearing due to a clerical error, Martinez said.

Two or three members of the parole board met with Holley, Martinez said. He did not have their names but that different board members will hear the case in September.

Richardson also said he was outraged that the board would parole Holley, given the seriousness of his crimes and the length of the original sentence.

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