



State of New Mexico

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Governors Bill Richardson, Arnold Schwarzenegger spearhead statement on immigration & border security during Border Governors Conference

TORREON, MEXICO – New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger successfully passed a statement today outlining shared principles on immigration and border security. The statement, which was developed with the help of governors and their representatives from 10 U.S. and Mexican border states, was adopted today during the 23rd Annual Border Governor's Conference.

The joint statement reads as follows:

We, the governors of the states that comprise the border between the United States of America and the United States of Mexico, jointly declare our commitment to work together to promote legal immigration. We support programs that facilitate the swift and lawful movement of people and goods. And we agree to evaluate legislative proposals, such as guest worker programs, that facilitate legal immigration in a way that mutually benefit both Mexico and the United States.

At the same time, violations of the laws of either country must not be tolerated. While border security is primarily the responsibility of the federal governments of Mexico and the United States, we, the border governors, recognize the importance of border security and the elimination of trafficking in persons.

We also recognize that provisions must be made to ensure respect for the human rights and safety of all immigrants, documented or undocumented. United States and Mexican border law enforcement agencies, both federal and state, must treat all immigrants with the respect and consistency to which they are entitled.

We look forward to the leadership of incoming Chair Governor Rick Perry of Texas and the Vice-chair Governor Eduardo Bours Castelo of Sonora, in addressing the critical issues of immigration and border security in the coming year.

“This was a constructive conference,” Governor Bill Richardson said during the closing ceremony of the conference. “We tackled many important issues, including one – immigration and border security – that has the potential of dividing, rather than united our two countries.

“I am pleased that we came together as friends and colleagues to create a positive joint statement by the border governors conference that recognizes a common commitment to work together to promote legal immigration.”

“I want to thank Governor Schwarzenegger for working with me to develop this joint statement. And I thank my colleagues on the Mexican side for their wisdom and important input as we adopted this statement unanimously. We all benefit from this type of dialogue.”

Governor Bill Richardson also worked with his colleagues in border states to address a number of issues that affect the border region, including water, economic development, education, science and technology.