



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson, U.S. Border Governors Call *on Congress to Pass Immigration Reform*

AUSTIN, TX -- The four U.S. governors of the Border Governors Conference Friday called on the U.S. Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation before the end of the year.

"The crisis on our border is the direct result of the Congress of the United States failing to do its job," said Governor Bill Richardson. "This is a very human and economic problem caused by a fundamental responsibility that the federal government has abdicated."

The U.S. governors' letter urged quick action to end the impasse.

"Instead of playing politics by holding dozens of field hearings that do little but stir the pot of discontent, we urge you to get back to work and pass legislation that puts the interests of taxpayers first and solves this crisis once and for all," declared the letter, signed by Governors Bill Richardson of New Mexico and Janet Napolitano of Arizona, both Democrats; and Governors Arnold Schwarzenegger of California and Rick Perry of Texas, both Republicans.

"As governors who are on the front lines of America's immigration crisis, we write to urge you to take real action and pass comprehensive reform legislation that is tough on the border, fair to taxpayers and restores the rule of law by practically dealing with the 12 million illegal immigrants currently in the country."

The action came at the 24th U.S.-Mexico Border Governors' Conference in Austin, Texas. The Conference focused on topics including Agriculture, Border Crossings, Economic Development, Education, Energy, Environment, Health, Science and Technology, Security and Tourism, Water, and Wildlife. All six Mexican border state governors also attended, including Governor Jose Reyes Baeza (Chihuahua), Governor Eugenio Elorduy Walther (Baja California), Governor Eduardo Bours Castelo (Sonora), Governor Humberto Moreira Valdes (Coahuila), Governor Eugenio Hernandez Flores (Tamaulipas), and Governor Jose Natividad Gonzales Paras, (Nuevo Leon).

In addition to the letter addressed to Representative Dennis Hastert and Senator Bill Frist, all ten governors approved a declaration that urged cooperation on border security, on combating cross-border criminal activity and called on both federal governments to stress economic development in the border region.

Both the U.S. governors' letter on immigration reform and the border security resolution arose during discussions about a proposed declaration on the subjects, offered jointly by Governors Richardson and Schwarzenegger.

Gov. Richardson earlier noted the common bonds of the border area in his closing remarks.

“As border states we have found that we share more in common than in contrast,” stated Governor Bill Richardson. “By working together we can accomplish more than if we allow the border to keep us apart. As one region we are taking the necessary steps to protect our borders, improve our economies, create new jobs, and improve communication between our two countries.”

Other highlights from the 24th U.S. - Mexico Border Governors Conference 2006 Joint Declaration:

- The governors committed to continue working together to eradicate criminal activity and to work together to facilitate legal movement of people and goods across the border.
- The governors will call upon both federal governments to pass laws criminalizing the construction or financing of tunnels. And they urge the development of greater cross-border law enforcement coordination and cooperation, both at the state level and the federal level.

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