

IN CALIFORNIA, FOX GETS WARM EMBRACE AND A COLD SHOULDER

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SACRAMENTO, May 25 — In an echo of the debate on [immigration](#) under way in Washington, the [California](#) Legislature gave visiting President Vicente Fox of [Mexico](#) a two-edged welcome on Thursday.

Democratic and Latino members, including the Assembly speaker, Fabian Núñez, embraced Mr. Fox, while some Republicans boycotted his evening address to a joint session of the Legislature. Other Republicans attended the speech, but wore yellow buttons reading "No más!" to protest Mr. Fox's support for liberalizing American policies on immigration.

In his address, Mr. Fox praised the immigration bill passed by the Senate on Thursday as a "historic step" and as a "moment that millions of families have been hoping for."

"Mexico believes that it will take more than just enforcement or building walls to truly solve the challenges posed by the migration phenomenon," he said, "and that a comprehensive reform is in the interests of both nations."

Assemblyman Chuck DeVore, Republican of Orange County, refused to attend Mr. Fox's speech because, he said in an interview, a foreign leader has no right to come to the United States to lobby openly on a piece of domestic legislation.

"I do not at all appreciate a foreign head of state telling my nation how to deal with its own sovereignty and the issue of immigration," said Mr. DeVore, an aerospace executive and a lieutenant colonel in the California Army National Guard.

Mr. DeVore, like many other Republicans in the California Legislature, supports the House version of national immigration legislation that focuses on securing the southern border and imposes sanctions on employers who hire illegal immigrants.

He opposes the provision of the Senate bill that would lead to legalization for many of the millions of illegal immigrants already in the country, saying it is nothing more than amnesty for those who broke the law to come here.

Mr. Fox, who is in the last months of his six-year term, is in California on the final leg of a four-day visit to the United States to advocate comprehensive immigration legislation, including better enforcement on both sides of the border. He has also spoken with business and government leaders about expanding trade, which he said would increase opportunity in Mexico so that fewer Mexicans feel compelled to sneak into the United States to find work.

He told the California lawmakers that his country would do its share to reduce the unregulated flow of people across the border. "We want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem," Mr. Fox said.

He also said: "Comprehensive reform will help both countries to concentrate on efforts and resources on addressing our shared security and prosperity concerns. We are your partners in security against terrorism. We are your allies in the war on drugs and crime. Let us work together as neighbors, as partners, as friends."

Mr. Núñez, who invited Mr. Fox to address the California Legislature, said lawmakers who boycotted the speech were showing disrespect to an important neighbor and trading partner.

Gov. [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), a Republican, met privately with Mr. Fox on Thursday evening and was then the host at a reception for him.