

# **DEMONSTRATORS MASS DURING ZEDILLO VISIT PROTESTS ON PROP. 187, HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES**

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## **Body**

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About 1,000 **demonstrators** filled the lawn of the state Capitol on Tuesday to mark the first **visit** this century by a Mexican president with **protests** against his government's **human rights** policies and the state's anti-immigration law.

An immigration lobbying event was scheduled long before President Ernesto **Zedillo** Ponce de Leon announced he would kick off a three-day swing through California at the Capitol, but the issues of Proposition **187** and Mexico's bloody quelling of rebellion in the southern state of Chiapas shared a public airing thanks to the coincidence of timing.

As activists denounced Gov. Gray Davis for refusing to drop the appeal of a Proposition **187** court ruling, **Zedillo** was telling reporters that he has trust in Davis' decision to send the initiative to mediation. **Zedillo** added that he believes the courts will provide "a good solution" to the divisive 1994 initiative that banned public school and most health services for illegal immigrants.

Eric Mar, acting executive director of the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant **Rights**, who helped organize "Hungry for Justice: Immigrant Lobby Day," disagreed.

"Many immigrant communities helped put him (Davis) into office, and we feel everything we are saying is falling on deaf ears," Mar said. "The message we are sending here is we are organized and we're not going to go away. We want to work with the governor so he can represent our needs."

Lisa Castellanos and Anabel Ibanez, both of San Jose, held yellow and black placards urging Davis to "End the Politics of Division" on one side and "Drop the **187** Appeal Now" on the flip side. The women were among 50 **demonstrators** who went by caravan to Sacramento for the day.

"We want the Legislature to understand the needs of the immigrant community, not only in the South Bay but throughout the state," said Ibanez, 28, a community organizer with the South Bay Labor Council. "Given the fact that in Santa Clara County, immigrants make up one-third of the population, they need to understand that whatever policies they pass are going to affect a large number of people."

Later Tuesday, 75 anti-**Zedillo** and anti-Proposition **187** protesters chanted slogans, waved homemade signs and carried white crosses outside San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel before **Zedillo**'s 8 p.m. speech.

"We might be here few of us," the demonstration's leader said into a microphone. "But we are here to represent those people who have disappeared."

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He referred to casualties in the Mexican government's war against the people of Chiapas.

Before his speech, **Zedillo** hosted a private meeting with about 30 Latino leaders from throughout California, including three from San Jose.

Mexican Heritage Corp. Chairman Fernando Zazueta invited **Zedillo** to the opening of the Mexican Heritage Plaza in East San Jose on Sept. 9. **Zedillo** didn't say whether he would attend, but "he said he'd do anything in his power to see if something can be done to respond to us," Zazueta said.

**Demonstrators** in Sacramento also spent the day lobbying lawmakers to pass bills to increase job training, social services, employment protection and health care for poor families, regardless of their immigration status. And they urged support of a bill that would allow undocumented immigrants who graduate from California high schools to pay in-state tuition if they are accepted to California State University or a community college campus.

Of key interest is a bill carried by state Sen. John Vasconcellos, D-San Jose, that would require all schools with at least 50 low-income students to provide breakfast to students each school day.

"That legislation will benefit the whole community, and we support that," Castellanos said.

## Notes

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Mercury News Staff Writer Edwin Garcia contributed to this report.

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