

## **Quake aid for illegal immigrants is newest fault line**

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### **Body**

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The California earthquake has produced **new** political shudders in Washington over the issue of disaster **aid** to **illegal immigrants**.

Anti-**immigrant** resentment is at an all-time high in California, and Congress this week was forced to respond. "There is no taste for even the appearance of providing scarce federal resources for people with no legal right to be here," says Dan Stein, head of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which wants to reduce immigration.

Thursday, the House approved a \$ 8.6 billion **aid** bill that denies such benefits as free housing, cash grants and low-interest loans to undocumented **immigrants** - the first time a disaster-relief bill has been so restricted. They can receive emergency medical **aid**, food and temporary shelter.

The restriction was offered by conservative California Republicans. Democrats - pressed by fed-up constituents at home - revised and reluctantly voted for the amendment out of fear something more onerous would pass.

A similar restriction was offered for the flood-**aid** bill last year but failed.

"It's an easy political message," says Republican consultant Eddie Mahe. "This gives (politicians) the opportunity to be tough. And, in these days, toughness is in and simpatico is out."

Raul Yzaguirre of the National Council of La Raza said the **aid** restriction was made easier because so many victims are Hispanics.

**Immigrants** are good scapegoats . . . because they're powerless, voiceless," says Mario Moreno of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., and other conservatives vow to attempt to attach an anti-illegals amendment to every appropriations bill that comes up.

### **Notes**

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THE NATION

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PHOTO, b/w

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