

PROP. 187 BRAWL STIRS UP DEBATE WHO'S TO BLAME?: BOTH SIDES POINT FINGERS.

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Body

The leader of a national Hispanic citizens group Friday accused Gov. Pete Wilson of fomenting hatred that sparked street violence over illegal immigration, an allegation the governor's spokesman called "outrageous."

The president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, in Boston to address the group's national convention, **blamed** Wilson and political conservatives for creating a volatile atmosphere that could erupt into violence like a street **brawl** between activists that broke out Thursday in Los Angeles. Six people were injured and one was hospitalized.

"Anytime a government official uses his position to promote racism and discrimination against one group of people simply because it is politically expedient, then that official must take the responsibility for the forces of divisiveness and hatred that he has unleashed," LULAC President Belen Robles said in a news release.

In a speech, Robles set blame for the violence on a small group of leftist extremists, but in published remarks she laid the blame for a "powder keg" atmosphere at Wilson's feet.

Wilson's spokesman, Sean Walsh, called Robles' accusation "absolutely and utterly outrageous."

"To say such irresponsible, frenzied, comments . . . this individual has essentially called 60 percent of the state of California racist for caring about the billions and billions of dollars in services the state provides to illegal immigrants," he said.

Wilson believed communist agitators were to blame for Thursday's violence, Walsh said.

One activist Friday called the immigration conflict a rebirth of the 19th century war between the United States and Mexico.

While most of Southern California marked the holiday with sand and surf, parades and parties, advocates on **both sides** of Proposition **187** clashed during an Independence Day demonstration that turned into a bloody **brawl**.

Proposition **187**, approved by voters in 1994, called for prohibiting illegal immigrants from receiving public education, non-emergency health care and social welfare services.

The initiative has not been implemented because of court challenges.

About 150 police officers with helmets and batons separated demonstrators in Westwood who beat each other with picket signs, full soda cans and their bare hands.

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Police attributed the flare-up of violence to heat and heated emotions, but activists on opposing sides of the immigration argument say conflict is inevitable.

Glenn Spencer, leader of the Voice of Citizens Together, said the groups that oppose Proposition 187 are essentially at war with the United States.

"Their real intent is the reconquest of the United States," Spencer said in a telephone interview. "This is the Mexican-American war revisited."

A spokeswoman for the Progressive Labor Party called Spencer's group a racist, anti-immigrant "fascist" organization.

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