

# Tancredo Letter to Mexican President Calderon

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-Littleton) today sent a letter to Mexican President Felipe Calderon questioning the motives behind his current visit to the United States as well as the charges levied by Mr. Calderon against the fairness of American immigration policy. A copy of the letter is below:

President Calderon:

I was disappointed by misguided comments you recently made regarding U.S.-Mexico relations and U.S. immigration laws. Purveying misinformation and absurd allegations is hardly a positive step to building a constructive partnership.

According to the Associated Press you recently said, “You have two economies. One economy is intensive in capital, which is the American economy. One economy is intensive in labor, which is the Mexican economy. We are two complementary economies, and that phenomenon is impossible to stop.” Yes, both countries benefit by the 85% of Mexico’s manufacturing exports that come to the U.S., but people are not commodities. While I appreciate your concern for our joint prosperity, the economic and social ills that plague your country cannot be resolved by simply exporting your citizens to the United States.

It is undeniable that Mexico faces major challenges. Endemic corruption and the power of violent drug cartels still dominate everyday life across Mexico. Beyond the headlines, Mexico has deep institutional maladies. Mexico’s absurdly antiquated Napoleonic-inquisition styled legal system and the squandering of robust energy-industry opportunity by a poorly managed, state-run Pemex monopoly are just two examples of the kind of self-inflicted wounds that hobble your troubled nation.

I understand that you are attempting to resolve some of these problems and applaud your leadership in trying to do so. But what would contribute more to the long term stability of your economy and your country would be to focus more energy on addressing your domestic challenges and less on lobbying the U.S. to provide amnesty for Mexicans who have illegally entered this country with the blessing of your government. In doing so, you might be able to keep Mexico’s “best and brightest young men” in Mexico – where they can contribute more to Mexico’s economy than remittance payments. Unfortunately, your recent comments indicate that Mexico will continue its policy of encouraging illegal immigration and treating the United States as little more than a dumping ground for your social and economic problems.

In your speech yesterday to the California State legislature, you lectured the American people on how to improve our immigration policies. Why did you not propose that we model our policies on Mexico’s own policies toward illegal entry across your own southern border? Mexico expends enormous resources to prevent Guatemalans, Hondurans and Salvadorans from entering the

country illegally, but you castigate the United States for wanting secure borders. Mr. President, in my neighborhood that is called hypocrisy.

You proposed in your Sacramento speech that “migration” be made “legal, safe and organized.” Mr. President, we already have such a program and it is called legal immigration. Over one million legal immigrants come through our ports of entry each year, not across our border fences. The American people set limits on the number of legal immigrants through our immigration laws, and it is not the job of the Mexican government to revise or expand those limits.

President Calderon, you are insulting the American people when you tell us that fifteen to twenty million illegal aliens in our country bring only benefits and no costs. I challenge you to give one concrete example of how the enforcement of our existing immigration laws violates anyone’s human rights. The people of Oklahoma are not anti-Mexican for passing laws to require verification of employment eligibility. The people of Indiana are not anti-immigrant for passing laws to require photo identification for voting. The people of California are not anti-Mexican for denying driver’s licenses to illegal aliens. The people of Arizona are not anti-immigrant for passing laws that deny welfare benefits to people who are in that state unlawfully.

It is no secret that the purpose of your visit is to influence the American election, and in fact your trip has been billed as a high-stakes effort to shape the immigration debate underway in the U.S. presidential race. What is perhaps more disappointing, however, is your attempt to insinuate that anti-amnesty sentiment here in the U.S. is the same as anti-Mexican sentiment. I am referring to your statement, “I need to change in the perception that the Americans are the enemy, and it is important to change the perception that the Mexicans are the enemy.”

It is both disingenuous and dangerous for you to inject this kind of xenophobia into this debate. The fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans support the enforcement of our immigration laws and take issue with the notion that we should reward illegal behavior, hardly qualifies as ethnic animosity or international enmity. What you must understand is that a treasured aspect of our national foundation is a respect for the rule of law. Perhaps if corruption were not so widespread and commonplace in Mexico, it would be easier for you to understand this.

President Calderon, in many ways your trip thus far has been a long series of mixed messages. You accuse the United States of recent protectionist trends, yet you heavily restrict foreign entry into Mexico’s energy sector through a massive, state-run Pemex monopoly. You assure American politicians that an open flow of cheap Mexican labor is not only benign but vitally necessary, but you take great care in securing your own southern border with Guatemala. You come to the United States purportedly to promote better political and economic ties with the U.S., but then issue a thinly veiled threat that Mexicans will regard the U.S. as an enemy if we refuse to provide millions of illegal aliens with unconditional amnesty.

President Calderon, I respectfully suggest that the next time you visit our country, rather than trying to influence U.S. policymakers or our election process, you take time to listen to Americans rather than lecture them. If you want to make changes in government policies, apply your energies to Mexico’s laundry list of problems rather than meddling in domestic American politics.