

*Immigration - Prop. 187 @001*

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**Reno Opposes California Ballot Measure on Illegal Aliens**  
By CAROLYN SKORNECK  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Attorney General Janet Reno announced her opposition today to a California ballot measure that would deny some benefits to illegal aliens, including public schooling for children.

"I'm opposed to it," Reno said under questioning by reporters at her weekly news conference.

"It doesn't make sense to turn school teachers and nurses into border patrol agents, it doesn't make sense to kick kids out of school or not to give them immunizations," she said, adding that "even some of the supporters are concerned that Proposition 187 is unconstitutional."

A report on the proposition's constitutionality is being prepared by the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel.

Meanwhile, a poll released today reveals that public support for the proposition has dropped from a high of 64 percent in July to 52 percent this week. The telephone survey by the independent Field Poll contacted 681 people from Oct. 21-25, and has a 4.5 percent margin of error.

In California, where illegal immigration is a hot issue, prominent Republican politicians running in tightly contested elections this year have endorsed it. They include Gov. Pete Wilson, who is seeking re-election, and Rep. Michael Huffington, who is trying to unseat Sen. Dianne Feinstein. In addition, the state Republican party is one of the proposition's biggest financial supporters.

The proposition would deny non-emergency health care and social services to illegal aliens. It also would prohibit illegal alien children from going to California schools. A 1982 Supreme Court decision ruled that public school education cannot be denied.

Conservatives Jack Kemp and William Bennett have opposed the proposition and President Clinton has expressed deep reservations about it.

Reno stressed the Justice Department's efforts to beef up control of illegal immigration, saying, "We have developed over these last 18 months a comprehensive effort along the border."

The Clinton administration pledged two weeks ago to halt illegal immigration across the Mexican border. Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick said at the time that new fences, lights, sensors, night-vision scopes and additional Border Patrol agents were being placed along the 2,000-mile border with Mexico. The first intensive efforts began last fall at El Paso, Texas, and last month in California south of San Diego.

"I think we have got to continue our efforts against illegal immigration while at the same time recognizing that there are critical constitutional issues with respect to Proposition 187," Reno said.

For the past few weeks, the Justice Department has attacked Wilson on illegal immigration as he contended the administration acted only after he started accusing the federal government of inaction.

Reno said it "certainly would make sense" for the Office of Legal Counsel's review of the proposition to be issued before the election.

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