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Austin, June 18 (RHC)-- In the U.S., Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced he has sent a group of migrants to Los Angeles, the latest attempt by Abbott to provoke progressive California on immigration.

Abbott's decision expands a program that has sent thousands of migrants to Vice President Kamala Harris's residence in Washington as well as to Denver, Chicago and Philadelphia as part of an effort to call attention to U.S. border policy.

The Texas governor's move comes days after Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration transported asylum-seekers from Texas to Sacramento, prompting condemnations and threats of criminal prosecution from California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said first responders and nonprofits had been alerted to the arrival of more than 40 migrants — and excoriated Abbott for “using human beings as pawns in his cheap political games.” “Los Angeles is not a city motivated by hate or fear and we absolutely will not be swayed or moved by petty politicians playing with human lives,” Bass said in a statement.

The evening’s events marked a familiar cycle: Republicans say they are merely responding to surging migration, and Democrats accuse their counterparts of exploiting asylum-seekers for political stunts. DeSantis and Abbott have defended their migrant relocation programs by saying border towns have become overwhelmed by new arrivals. They have also used them to taunt blue states that have enacted policies extending services and protections.

Both California and cities throughout the state have passed “sanctuary” laws shielding immigrants from deportation — though asylum-seekers who have been processed and cleared by federal authorities have at least temporary legal status.

“Texas’ small border towns remain overwhelmed and overrun by the thousands of people illegally crossing into Texas from Mexico because of President Biden’s refusal to secure the border,” Abbott said in a statement. “Los Angeles is a major city that migrants seek to go to, particularly now that its city leaders approved its self-declared sanctuary city status.”

DeSantis, who has touted Florida transporting migrants to places like Martha’s Vineyard as he seeks the Republican presidential nomination, addressed the flights to Sacramento last week by faulting “sanctuary jurisdictions” for rising migration. “When they have to deal with some of the fruits of that they all of a sudden become very, very upset about that,” DeSantis said during a visit to Arizona’s southern border.

Republicans note that the Biden administration and Democratic officials have also moved migrants around the country. But Newsom has drawn a distinction, saying the White House’s transport was coordinated.

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