

Farm bill's friends and foes keep heat on Davis

Labor • Unions square off against big growers, with the governor reluctant to offend either side.

By LOUISE CHU
The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO

As farm workers continue their 150-mile trek up the Central Valley to the front steps of Gov. Gray Davis' office, pressure continued to build Friday on what some have touted as one of the biggest decisions of Davis' political career.

Torn between major business interests on one side and his traditional Democratic labor constituency on the other, Davis has not taken a position on a bill that would force binding arbitration when contract negotiations fail between growers and unions.

"I still have hope because I think (vetoing the bill) would be the biggest mistake he's ever made in his political life, and it's the biggest moral mistake he'll ever make in his life," said Senate Leader John

I think (vetoing the bill) would be the biggest mistake he's ever made in his political life, and it's the biggest moral mistake he'll ever make in his life.'

SENATE LEADER JOHN BURTON, D-San Francisco, who authored SB1726.

union more time to drum up support.

Fueling the debate are reports that Davis aides tried to negotiate amendments to the bill with Burton but were rebuffed.

Burton and the governor have clashed on many issues.

"On the Bible, I solemnly swear that no one, no one from the governor's office ever talked to me about this piece of legislation," Burton said, resting his right hand on the Bible. "I would encourage the governor and his office to take that same oath."

Burton, D-San Francisco, who authored SB1726.

The bill, which has passed the Senate and the Assembly with strong Democratic support, is ready to be sent to the governor's desk, although Burton said he's holding on to it to allow the United Farm Workers

Davis' press secretary, Steve Maviglio, said Davis has not proposed amendments, but aides have discussed the bill with Burton's staff on several occasions.

The governor hasn't considered amendments at this point, Maviglio said, because Burton doesn't want to negotiate.

But Burton said he rejects any excuses being made for Davis' indecision.

"The whipping boy, if he decides to veto the bill, is not going to be John L. Burton."

Outside the Capitol, UFW representatives and growers met Thursday in a session mediated by the Department of Personnel Administration.

So far, "there's no middle ground that's been established" between the two groups, and discussions have revolved around general "concepts and issues," said Don Gordon, president of the Agricultural Council of California, which opposes the bill.

Meanwhile, Burton continues to add pressure for his cause.

"All you've got to do is look at these people's faces," he said after joining the march Thursday.

"A 70-year-old walking a couple hundred miles to get the Democratic governor to give them their rights is somewhat disheartening," he said.

"Something like this tends to tear the heart out of you ... assuming you have one."

LATINO UPDATE

• **Health care:** A state Senate committee has approved a bill to set up a pilot program for doctors and dentists from Mexico to work in certain clinics and hospitals in California.

Assemblyman Marco Firebaugh, D-Cudahy, sponsored the bill to try to address the shortage of doctors and dentists in some areas of California, many of which have high Hispanic populations. Amendments were completed Thursday that strengthened oversight of the pro-

Santa Ana Register 8/27

gram by the Medical Board of California and the Dental Board of California.

AB1045 was on hold for more than a year while Firebaugh addressed concerns about graduate education received by Mexican doctors and dentists.

The proposed pilot program would allow 30 doctors and 30 dentists to work in clinics and hospitals with great need for doctors and dentists. The bill would allow the Mexican health professionals to use a three-year, nonrenewable license.

WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED

**We shall not, we shall not be moved
We shall not, we shall not be moved
Just like a tree that's planted by
the water, we shall not be moved.**

**The union is behind us...
We're fighting for our freedom...
We'll build a mighty Union...
Cesar is our leader...
We're fighting for our children...**