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Perry on amnesty

I take strong issue with a news report in *The Dallas Morning News* mischaracterizing my position on amnesty for undocumented immigrants from Mexico ("Perry wary of amnesty — He says Bush plan needs closer look," July 27). The truth is, I am intrigued and open to the Bush administration's amnesty proposal. Most Texans would agree that it's better to have legal, taxpaying immigrants from Mexico working in the United States than illegal immigrants living in fear of the law and afraid to access basic services.

I have long advocated closer ties with Mexico, and I have spent much time in recent months meeting with Mexican state and federal officials discussing the future of Texas and our two nations. I am optimistic about the vision Presidents Bush and Fox have for closer U.S.-Mexico relations. If Mexico implements the reforms President Fox wants and develops a stronger middle class, the goal of a more seamless, transparent border could become a reality.

In the meantime, as I told *The Morning News*, there are many unanswered questions about how an amnesty plan would be implemented and how it would ultimately impact our state's health care and education systems, as well as other services. Any amnesty proposal must be thoroughly debated and analyzed before implementation and should include input from all border states. Such a plan could benefit our state and countless Mexican families seeking a better life. I applaud President Bush for initiating a public dialogue on this important issue and welcome the opportunity to participate in the development of this initiative.

RICK PERRY,
Governor of Texas,
Austin