

Obama: I need allies with passion in Congress

President Barack Obama waves after speaking at a fundraiser for Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., in San Francisco, Tuesday, May 25, 2010. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

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SAN FRANCISCO—President Barack Obama on Tuesday said Republicans have to help him solve big issues like energy and immigration if the country is to move forward.

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Speaking at a series of fundraisers for Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer, Obama chided Republicans for sitting on the sidelines and putting politics ahead of the needs of the American people.

"There are members of their base who think if somebody even smiles at me, they think, 'You're a traitor, you smiled at Obama,'" the president said.

In a testy, closed-door meeting between Obama and GOP lawmakers on Capitol Hill earlier in the day, some Republicans accused Obama of being inauthentic in his calls for bipartisanship, an accusation Obama bristled at Tuesday night.

"There's gotta be some give on the other side, particularly when you drove the car into the ditch. We can't just go back to business as usual," he said.

Obama was in California to help raise campaign cash for Boxer for the second straight month. Boxer is running for her fourth term, and though she easily won her last re-election, California's economic woes and an anti-Washington electorate are creating tough re-election prospects this year.

Obama lauded Boxer's work on clean energy reform, an issue where progress is needed now more than ever in light of the massive and ongoing oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, he said.

Obama is set to travel to the region on Friday. He said the devastating spill that is pumping millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf is "heartbreaking."

"Nobody is more upset than me," he said. "When this happens on your watch, then every day you are thinking how does this get solved."

Obama also renewed his calls for comprehensive immigration reform. While the day has passed when he expected full bipartisan support on the issue, Obama said he still needs some Republican support.

"You've got to meet me on solving the problem long term," he said. "It's not enough just to talk about National Guard down at the border."

On Tuesday, Obama ordered 1,200 National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexico border to boost security there.

As happened during his fundraisers for Boxer last month, Obama was interrupted by a protester demanding he "move faster" to repeal the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that bars gays from serving openly in the military. Obama said next time, the protester should buy a ticket for an event with a politician who doesn't support the repeal.

The White House struck a deal Monday with a small group of Democrats who fear that repeal efforts will be doomed if Republicans regain control of one or both houses of Congress after the November elections. The plan would

both houses of Congress after the November elections. The plan would overturn the "don't ask, don't tell" law but still allow the military to decide when and how to implement any changes to accommodate the new policy.

After the fundraiser at the Fairmont Hotel, Obama attended a private fundraising dinner at the home of billionaire philanthropists Ann and Gordon Getty. Tuesday's fundraisers were expected to raise \$1.7 million for Boxer and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Boxer's opponent will be decided in a June 8 GOP primary that pits former Hewlett-Packard chief executive Carly Fiorina against former Rep. Tom Campbell and California Assemblyman Chuck DeVore, who has been endorsed by the leaders of the tea party movement.

The president was scheduled to spend Tuesday night in San Francisco, then head to nearby Fremont on Wednesday to tour a solar facility and make remarks on the economy. ■

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