ALBUQUERQUE – At a press conference organized by El CENTRO on June 23, organizations representing ListoNM, families, elected officials, legal experts, and community allies denounced the outrageous decision by the Supreme Court to uphold the injunction on President Obama’s administrative relief programs—known as DACA+ and DAPA—which had been put on hold due to an anti-immigrant lawsuit spearheaded by the state of Texas. Upon implementation the programs could have benefitted more than 36,000 hard working families in New Mexico and 5 million immigrant families nationwide in addition to growing the economy.

“Today the Supreme Court issued a split decision that will leave in place the preliminary injunction blocking DAPA and the expansion as DACA+ and DAPA—which had been put on hold due to an anti-immigrant lawsuit spearheaded by the state of Texas. Upon implementation the programs could have benefitted more than 36,000 hard working families in New Mexico and 5 million immigrant families nationwide in addition to growing the economy.

“Today the Supreme Court issued a split decision that will leave in place the preliminary injunction blocking DAPA and the expansion as DACA+. While today’s deadlock sets no Supreme Court precedent, these important, commonsense policies will remain blocked nationwide for the time being,” said Eva Eitzen, Legal Director of New Mexico Immigrant Law Center.

Bertha Campos, an Albuquerque small business owner, and mother of five has lived in the U.S. for the past 28 years. She, like most immigrants, lives in a mixed status family and she would have qualified for DAPA. “Today the Court decided to maintain the status quo for millions of families across the country,” she said. “But, we will not be silent. We will continue organizing locally against deportations and to protect workers’ rights. In addition, the Latino community will remember which politicians are responsible for this come November.”

Members of ListoNM vowed to continue to fight for the dignity of their families, “Today’s decision is only a small setback in our fight for families. Our community will not stop fighting until we win the comprehensive immigration reform that our families deserve and that reflects the shared values to which we aspire as a nation,” stated Karla Molinar Arvizo, a member of the New Mexico Dream Team.

It is estimated that over 36 thousand people would have benefited from the immigration initiative and could have created an economic stimulus of up to $1 billion during the following decade after implementation in NM alone. “Not only is the injunction putting our families at risk for deportation, but this is a sad day for New Mexico’s economy,” stated Andrea Plaza Executive Director of Encuentro.

“The battle is not over. We are urging the Obama administration to seek rehearing in this case so that a fully constituted Supreme Court can issue a binding decision in this case,” said Campos.

El CENTRO’s thanks those elected officials who supported DACA+ and DAPA such as Congresswoman Lujan Grisham, Congressman Lujan, Senator Heinrich, and Attorney General Balderas who signed on to amicus briefs. “We continue to voice our disappointment in Gov. Susana Martinez who continues to target the immigrant community and who opposed these programs which would have greatly benefited New Mexico families, workers, and the economy.

If you wish to obtain information about the Supreme Court decision, about DACA 2012 (which was not impacted by the Supreme Court decision), and about upcoming informational forums visit www.listonm.org or text “LISTO” to (505) 465-4994. Information forums will include a screening session to find out if you qualify for a form of immigration relief like DACA 2012 or others, information on citizenship, how to register or help register people to vote, and a community dialog on what are the next steps in our fight for our families. To get involved in the on-going fight for immigration reform, to stop deportations locally, and for workers’ rights, contact El CENTRO at (505) 246-1627 or www.elcentronm.org
ALBUQUERQUE, NM – At a press conference on June 3, former Garcia’s Kitchen employee, Pedro Maldonado, with the support of El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos (El CENTRO), a local immigrants’ rights and workers’ justice organization, publicly denounced the discrimination he suffered at the restaurant. Maldonado, 34, is suing Garcia’s Kitchen under the New Mexico Human Rights Act for discriminating against him on account of his HIV status.

Maldonado worked at Garcia’s Kitchen for approximately 3 months during 2014. “The day I was fired I felt dehumanized, and stripped of my dignity because I was treated like a second class citizen”, Maldonado said. “It had a major impact on me emotionally and economically, but I am using this experience to send the message to workers to learn about their rights and to educate the public and debunk many of the myths that still exist about HIV/AIDS.”

Jessica Molzen, the CEO at New Mexico AIDS Services stated, “The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms that there is no known risk of HIV transmission to co-workers, clients, or consumers from contact in industries such as food-service establishments,” she said.

El CENTRO’s workers’ committee was also present during the action in support of Pedro. “Thanks to Pedro’s courage by telling his story, we are sending a very clear message. We won’t stay quiet!” said Sabina Flores, member of El CENTRO’s workers’ committee. “All workers have rights no matter our sexual orientation, gender, age, immigration status or medical condition.”

“One day I was fired; [After turning in the signature] Walking out of the restaurant, I feel like I’ve regained my dignity, my rights, and my spirit reenergized!” Maldonado said. “I’ve learned that I have gained a family with everyone in the community who has supported me and that I will continue lifting the voices of those who feel like they can’t speak up.”

For more information or if you are a worker who feels is facing discrimination in the workplace call El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos at (505) 246-1627 or go to the website www.elcentronm.org