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Monthly Newsletter

YOUR SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION

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HEALTHY WORKFORCE ABQ; WHAT IS IT?

ALBUQUERQUE – A new campaign which aims to create a policy on earned sick days and could benefit more than one hundred thousand workers in Albuquerque, was launched Sunday, May 8. As part of our workers’ justice efforts, EL CENTRO has joined a coalition of organizations in Albuquerque which is fighting to pass a city ordinance that would grant workers the security and peace of mind to call-in to work when sick or when a family member is sick, without fear of not getting paid or of getting fired in retaliation. Currently, there is no federal law or regulation that ensures that workers across the country have access to earned sick days.

The Healthy Workforce ABQ campaign, supported by organizations such as OLÉ, Strong Families New Mexico, the Southwest Organizing Project, the Center on Law and Poverty, El CENTRO, small businesses, and various unions seeks a ballot initiative where voters in the City of Albuquerque will have a chance to vote to ensure that all workers will have an earned sick days policy at their workplace.

The lack of access to earned sick days has a detrimental impact on Albuquerque families, including the majority of El CENTRO’s workers, and the people that receive services. Without paid sick days, our members are forced to choose between going to work sick and losing critical wages, or even their job.

Our member and “luchadora”, Plácida Cortez, who works as a housekeeper and hotel worker, has never had the benefit of earned sick days. During the press conference, she explained the difficulty produced by the lack of this benefit, “Not having this essential tool creates tough situations where sometimes I don’t know if I’ll be able to pay for my daily expenses and it creates an economic uncertainty for me and my family,” she said. Many children also go to school sick because their parents have no paid sick days and can’t afford to stay home and care for them.

“Having the ability to call-in sick without worrying about losing our wages, creates a healthier workforce that doesn’t compromise their productivity or public health.” Plácida reiterated. People without earned sick leave are 1.5 times more likely than those with earned sick leave to report going to work with contagious illnesses like the flu or a viral infection, putting the public health at risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control, around 20 percent of all food-related illnesses are caused by a sick waiter or food handler.

Enacting an earned sick days policy will help more families get ahead – and create a healthier city where more families and businesses thrive. The proposed earned sick days policy will ensure every Albuquerque worker can earn a minimum of 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked. People who work at businesses with less than 40 employees will be able to earn a minimum of five days per year, and people who work at businesses with 40 or more employees will be able to earn a minimum seven days per year.

El CENTRO needs members who will join our efforts in educating our community on the benefits and the need for earned sick days policy in our city. We also need members to help canvass in the community, get signatures for our ballot petition, and help register new voters in Albuquerque. The campaign needs to gather thousands of signatures from registered voters between May 9th & July 9th and we cannot do this without your help. We all understand the struggle of hard working conditions. It is up to us to also make sure that this vicious cycle does not continue spreading. For more information on how to get involved in this campaign please call us at (505) 246-1627, visit our website www.elcentronm.org, or visit our [Facebook page](#) where you can find the latest information on the actuality and the latest updates on the Healthy Workforce ABQ campaign.

1o de Mayo: International Workers’ Day

May Day has historically been the day to celebrate those who have and continue to fight for workers’ justice all over the world. May Day has its beginnings here in the U.S. and has also taken on special significance for much of the immigrant community across the States.

May Day holds a special significance because many immigrants have a legacy of celebrating May Day in their countries of origin. In addition, on this date in 2006, some of the biggest marches took place in the US to fight back against anti-immigrant legislation and to push for immigration reform. The marches made May 1st a symbolic date for the immigrant community to continue to denounce the hate and anti-immigrant attacks throughout the country and fight for their rights.

This day has also become a day to make a call against racism and xenophobia. In Albuquerque, El CENTRO has organized, with the support of allies, one of the largest marches in history, rallies, vigils, and dias de campo to continue the fight for immigration reform, for administrative relief (which led to winning DACA+ and DAPA), and to continue to highlight the contributions of immigrants and fight for workers’ justice.

To commemorate May Day, El CENTRO will be participating in the South Valley Celebration 2016, on Sunday, May 15, where we’ll honor the contribution from immigrant workers’ and families to the state for NM. If you’d like to learn more about opportunities to participate with El CENTRO, feel free to contact us by phone at (505) 246-1627, visit our website www.elcentronm.org, where you’ll find our full calendar of event every month, or visit us and follow us on [Facebook](#).



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WAGE THEFT WORKSHOPS

WHEN: May 11, 18, and 25
TIME: 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
ADDRESS: 714 4th St SW 87102
DESCRIPTION: Attend these free workshops if you think you've been a victim of wage theft and/or discrimination, and want to learn about your rights and options. Call us at (505) 246-1627 to reserve a place.

MAY DAY CELEBRATION

WHEN: May 15th
WHERE: Isleta Blvd. & Blake Rd.
 @ 10 a.m.
WHAT: Come and join El CENTRO in celebrating May Day during the South Valley Celebration 2016. El CENTRO will be taking part in a parade where we will celebrate all of the immigrant community's contributions to NM's economy and we'll highlight the need for immigration relief through DACA and DAPA.

HEALTHY WORKFORCE ABQ COMMUNITY CANVASS

WHEN: May 25th from 11AM- 5 PM
WHAT: For more information on how you can volunteer with El CENTRO to gather signatures for the HWABQ campaign call us at (505) 246-1627.

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY IN NM

WHEN: June 7th
WHERE: To find a polling location near you please visit:
<http://www.berncogov/clerk/elections.aspx>

JUNTA DE MEMBRESÍA

WHEN: June 16th
WHERE: El CENTRO (714 4th St. SW)
WHAT: Come join us at our membership meeting where we will discuss different issues affecting our community currently. Also take the time to meet other members and to engage in collective actions.



DACA & DAPA, THE BATTLE IN THE SUPREME COURT

ALBUQUERQUE- El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos organized a press conference on Monday, April 18, where Albuquerque families, elected officials, and legal experts showed their support for president Obama's deferred action initiatives which would provide relief from deportation for approximately 5 million immigrants. This same day the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on Texas v. United States, the executive actions on immigration, DAPA and expanded DACA.

These programs have been held up in the courts since Texas and 25 other states—in their majority Republican governors and attorneys general, sued the administration in December, 2014. Bertha Campos, an Albuquerque small business owner and mother of five has lived in the U.S. for the past 28 years and like most of our members lives in a mixed status family "I dream of a day when my family doesn't live with the constant fear of being

separated," she said. "Expanded DACA and DAPA would benefit all of us because we would have the chance to live up to our full potential."

The press conference also served as a platform to express outrage that Governor Martinez signed onto an amicus brief against the programs, pointing out that this is one among many actions exposing her anti-immigrant agenda. "The Governor, yet again, is on the wrong side of history when it comes to her position on immigration issues," said Rep. Javier Martínez (D- District 11). The Supreme Court is expected to make a decision on the future of the immigration initiatives by late June.

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MARTÍNEZ KEEPS WITHHOLDING YOUR TAX RETURN

SANTA FE – The battle for state tax returns for immigrants in the state of New Mexico continues to heat up as we approach the scheduled court hearing set for June of this year. The Martínez administration intentionally continues targeting immigrants' tax returns as part of her anti-immigrant agenda.

Somos Un Pueblo Unido, an immigrants' rights organization based in Santa Fe, NM, sued the Martínez administration in state court on Feb. 12, 2015, because the administration had been withholding millions in state tax refunds from hard working immigrant families that filed their state taxes using an ITIN number. The organization filed the lawsuits along with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and an Albuquerque law firm.

The Martínez administration falsely argues that their practice of withholding tax returns is a preventive measure to lower tax fraud in New Mexico. In 2014

the state reported having sent over 15,000 letters since 2012 to ITIN users demanding further documentation in order to receive a tax return. In some cases it was reported that immigrant taxpayers using ITIN numbers to file their state taxes were taxed doubled.

"Gov. Martínez has used her administration to continually target and discriminate against immigrant families in the state," expressed Emanuelle "Neza" Leal-Santillan, communications director for Somos Un Pueblo Unido. He also reiterated that the administration has overstepped its authority when it comes to creating tax policies, "...the administration can't create tax policy without approval of the legislature.. We have to educate legislators who may not know, that only they can create new policies."

If you have experienced a withhold in state tax returns, Somos asks you to contact them to document your individual case at (505) 424-7832 or email them at : somos@somosunpueblounido.org