Did You Know That APS Has Policies to Protect Immigrant Students and Their Families?

In these times of uncertainty, we, at El CENTRO, are proud to be partnering with APS and allies to inform parents, students, and educators about APS’ Safe School policies that pertain to providing safe have and to the protection of students from mixed-status families. Schools are meant to be safe places for all our children!

The highlights of the policy directives are:
- APS shall be a safe haven for students regardless of their immigration status.
- The United States Supreme Court has ruled that citizenship status cannot be used to deny public school admission to school age children.
- Immigration officials shall not be permitted to enter campus.
- APS shall not engage in any practice to deter or discourage the right of a student to attend public school.
- APS shall not require students or parents/legal guardians to disclose or document their immigration status or make inquiries that would expose their undocumented status.
- Should APS school or district personnel, for whatever reason, come across information regarding the immigration status of an immigrant student or his/her parents/legal guardians, such information shall not be provided to any outside agency, including any federal immigration agency.

For more information about the policies, ask to see the policy at any APS school counselors’ office, go to www.aps.edu or go to El CENTRO’s website at www.elcentronm.org. In addition, look for El CENTRO on local Spanish speaking media and listen to us on the airwaves of Radio Lobo in mid-March.

Felicidades ABQ! City Council Reaffirms Albuquerque as Immigrant Friendly City

In the wake of the memos issued in the past weeks by the Trump administration, over 40 immigrant and refugee-based organizations, faith-based institutions, victims and civil rights advocates, and business leaders and approximately 375 community members turned out to urge the Albuquerque City Council to vote in favor of Albuquerque reaffirming its status once again as an Immigrant Friendly City. This memorial is in line with our proud legacy of passing policies which are conducive to integrating immigrants into the mainstream. The memorial passed on a 6:1 vote with Councilors Peña, Benton, Sanchez, Davis, Gibson, and Winter voting in favor and Councilor Jones voting against.

In 2000, El CENTRO worked to pass a bi-partisan resolution- R-00-151- introduced by Councilor Hess Yntema (Republican, District Six, 1987-1991). This resolution declared ABQ an Immigrant Friendly City and made a commitment that the city will not use municipal resources to assist in the enforcement of federal immigration laws. Unfortunately, this resolution was undermined by the Berry administration who enforced a federal deportation program and “welcomed Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to check immigration status of suspects” at the prisoner transport center. Programs like that were found to foment racial profiling, undermine community policing, have a chilling impact on public safety, and gut the presumption of innocence enshrined in our Constitution. We will fight back to ensure that our City does not go in that direction again!

The City reaffirms its commitment to policies established under R-00-151 including but not limited to its commitment to “treat all persons with respect and dignity, regardless of their immigration status” and that “to the fullest extent allowed by federal and state law, immigrants who live within the city limits of Albuquerque and their families shall have access to all City services and programs.”

In addition, the City commits to reviewing current policies to look for opportunities to strengthen current policies. El CENTRO and allies will continue to organize immigrant and refugee communities moving forward to ensure that the City strengthens current policies. To get involved in our efforts with the City, or to ensure that ICE stays out of our County jail, contact El CENTRO.

Workers and Community Groups Win Temporary Restraining Order in Lawsuit Against Department of Workforce Solutions

On January 18th, El CENTRO along with other ally organizations filed a lawsuit against the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) for failing to Enforce State Wage and Hour Laws. Among other claims, the lawsuit challenges DWS’ illegally-imposed $10,000 cap on investigating wage theft claims and DWS’ illegal practice of not investigating on wage claims that go back more than a year.

On January 31st, Judge David Thomson of the First Judicial District Court issued a temporary restraining order requiring the DWS to immediately remedy the agency’s failure to enforce our state’s wage payment laws. The order will remain in effect until the Court holds a preliminary injunction hearing on May 3, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. This restraining order is the first step to asserting protections for workers seeking relief from wage theft. Hard working New Mexicans deserve strong workplace protections that honor their labor. We are proud that our members are plaintiffs and witnesses, that the Center on Law and Poverty is our legal counsel, and to be collaborating with the other plaintiff organizations: Somos un Pueblo Unido, OLE, and CAFE.

Member Sabina Armendariz states “El CENTRO has been a space where we have learned that we are not alone and has helped us to organize to defend not only our rights but the rights of other workers.” ¡Qué vivan los trabajadores!

If you would like to get involved, El CENTRO is recruiting new members for their worker’s rights committee. Contact Marco Nuñez at nunezabq32@gmail.com or 505-246-1627.
ABQ “Families Fight Back” against Trump’s Agenda

We recognize that we are at a period of darkness in the White House. However, our power and support have never come from Washington. Our power has always come and will continue to come from the base, from our members, immigrants, families, and workers. Since day one El CENTRO has been tirelessly fighting against Trump's draconian regime. We are passing and strengthening policies at the county and city level to ensure that our local governments do not enforce federal immigration laws. We are working with APS to ensure that ICE cannot target our communities. We have organized dozens of workshops so our community is ready to fight back against family separation. Our members have spoken out at press conferences after Trump’s executive orders, and at a vigil to denounce ICE activity targeting families.

In addition, El CENTRO was honored to stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters at a press conference organized by the Islamic Center of NM. Together, we repudiated the bigotry, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and hate motivating these orders. We also participated in the MLK parade and the Women’s March where one of our mothers and members Nallely Barrera gave a speech. We are proud that our members continue to speak out and organize for immigrants’ and workers’ rights and to protect our families!

If you would like join our membership, please contact Fabiola Bawden at fbawden_elcentro@yahoo.com, Marian Mendez at jazmen91@gmail.com or call us at 505-246-1627.

Here are some photos and quotes from our members in action!

Press Conference: Communities Come Together After Trump’s Executive Orders

Jessica Rodriguez speaking at the press conference: “I am angry at the way that Trump is trying to undermine our humanity and strip our communities of our basic dignity. Today, I am calling all members of my community not to be scared and fight back. And, I am requesting all allies not to remain silent, to stand by us, and to educate others that we are hard workers and that we are here to stay.”

ABQ “Families Fight Back” Vigil

Immigrant and Working Families "Presente" at the Women’s March and MLK ABQ Rallies

Nallely Barrera speaking at the Women’s March: “Trump has threatened to block the entry of refugees from certain countries, to deport millions of immigrants and to implement a registry for Muslims from certain countries. An attack on the refugee community, DACA, and immigrants is an attack on everyone. We cannot let this happen.”