Healthy Workforce Supporters Intervene to Protect Minimum Wage and Earned Sick Days for NM Hard-Working Families

In New Mexico, we strive to respect the work of individuals and families who are working hard to make a better future for their families and our communities. When people work hard, they should be paid fairly and at a level that allows them to provide for their families. We all benefit as a city when workers are doing better. Competitive minimum wages provide economic opportunity to hardworking families. More money in people’s pockets also means more money being invested in local economies.

In 2012, Albuquerque voters approved raising the minimum wage, including the tipped minimum wage. In 2016, Albuquerque voters signed a petition for paid sick leave to be put on the 2017 ballot. However, last month, the New Mexico Association of Commerce and Industry (NMACI), the Commercial Real Estate Development Association New Mexico Chapter (NAIOP), and the New Mexico Restaurant Association (NMRA) filed a lawsuit as a coalition to keep the paid sick leave question off Albuquerque’s ballot in the next municipal election and to overturn the minimum wage ordinance. This greedy coalition is looking to cut people’s paychecks by rolling back Albuquerque’s minimum wage and stopping voters from ensuring that every worker has the chance to earn paid sick leave.

We believe that cutting the paychecks of everyday Albuquerqueans is an insult to our state’s core values of fairness and respect. This is why the Center on Law and Poverty filed a motion earlier this month on behalf of OLE and El CENTRO to intervene in this lawsuit to protect the rights of low-wage workers and Albuquerque voters. Both organizations are part of Healthy Workforce ABQ; a campaign focused on a ballot initiative to win paid sick leave for over 100,000 workers in Albuquerque.

OLE and El CENTRO held a press conference on May 4th in front of the 2nd District Courthouse along with Tim Davis from Center on Law and Poverty, City Councilor Pat Davis, and community members impacted by the earned sick days and minimum wage ordinances. At this press conference, Alicia Saenz, a member of El CENTRO stated, “The thought of this small monied group of businesses attempting to lower the minimum wage makes me angry. I know what a losing of $3000 would mean for my household and tens of thousands of other workers in my community. Albuquerqueans spoke loud and clear in 2012 and voted overwhelmingly to pass an increase. The democratic process must be honored.” NMACI, NAIOP, and the NMRA are trying to take away YOUR voice! They truly are hurting Albuquerque workers! Let’s show them that the power of the people is stronger than their greed!

If you would like to get involved or learn more about workers’ rights, El CENTRO is recruiting new members for their workers’ rights committee. Contact Marco Nuñez at mnunez_elcentro@yahoo.com, Marian Mendez at mmendez_elcentro@yahoo.com, Claudia Garcia cigarcia_elcentro@yahoo.com or call 505-246-1627. Also, stay tuned to our website www.elcentronm.org and Facebook.

Another Hard-earned Victory for our Working Families: Lawsuit Advances Alleging DWS Fails to Enforce NM Labor Laws

Congratulations to New Mexico’s working families for another victory! We are proud to announce on April 28th that New Mexico’s First Judicial Court ruled against the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS)’s request to dismiss the lawsuit that El CENTRO filed along with New México Comunidades en Acción y de Fé (CAFE), OLE, and Somos Un Pueblo. Through this lawsuit, we demand that DWS must enforce state laws protecting workers against wage theft. Wage theft is the illegal practice of not paying workers for all of their work, including violating minimum wage laws, not paying overtime, and forcing people to work off the clock.

Marco Nuñez, El CENTRO’s workers’ justice coordinator explains one more example of how hard working New Mexicans are getting the short end of the stick in our state — but we are fighting back. This case is too important to dismiss, particularly given the profound impact wage theft has on New Mexican working families. We applaud the ruling and look forward to continuing to expose systemic failures by DWS to enforce New Mexico wage and hour laws.”El CENTRO, along with the partnering organizations, will request a final ruling from the court this summer.

For more information about our actions, go to El CENTRO’s website at www.elcentronm.org. Also, look for El CENTRO on local Spanish-speaking media and listen to us on the airwaves of Radio Lobo.
In the wake of President Trump’s first 100 days in office, El CENTRO along with hundreds of immigrant families, dozens of civil rights, LGBTQ, and community-based organizations, low-wage workers, elected officials, faith leaders, labor unions, and educators organized a rally in solidarity with the “Rise Up” national general strike on May 1st. That day, hundreds in our communities did not go to work, school, or make purchases to show our political and economic power. In resistance to the Trump administration’s targeting of immigrant communities and working families, we came together at a peaceful rally at Tiguex Park.

In New Mexico, we take the attack on immigrant communities personally. We, immigrants, grow the economy and work to create a brighter future for all our children.

We must all do our part as a community to fight back against the persecution of our fellow-New Mexicans. Mirna Lazcano, an active member of El CENTRO, a student at Encuentro, mother, and worker spoke about the importance of immigrant families participating in the rally “I attended the May Day rally because I wanted to tell Mr. Trump that we immigrants contribute to society and that we are here to stay. I also wanted to show my support to all workers, especially those who receive minimum wage. May Day was a beautiful and peaceful day in which we united as a community to fight for working families, immigrants, and refugees.”

At this event, our members and allies showed the economic and political power of our communities. Ellen Bernstein, president of the Albuquerque Teacher’s Federation, said schools have to be respectful and welcoming places for everyone, “The Trump and Martinez administrations don’t want thinking people. They want to make sure we cannot decipher their coded messages of bigotry and racism. But we don’t buy it.”

More than a thousand people came out for the May Day Rise Up ABQ Rally, which featured live music with ABQ High School Choir, Baracutanga, Drum Circle Lisa Lucero y Mariachi Luna Azul. We also had the performance from Danza Mayahuel Kalpulli Izkalli and Nahui Ollin Healing Circle, Ballet Folklorico Desoluna, and children’s activities featuring Payasita Lollipop and face painting thanks to Partnership for Community Actions. In addition to speakers who addressed assaults on the rights of workers, immigrants and teachers, and oppressive policies coming out of Washington. Tono Orduño member of El CENTRO, a student at Encuentro NM, and a member of Mariachi Luna Azul explained why he performed, “I have always been against the discrimination of our people. Participating in the May Day rally was important to demonstrate that we, immigrants, are present, that we are united and that we have strength as a community. It is important to unite and support one another because we can make a big difference if we work together.”

In addition, over 200 local immigrant-owned businesses in Albuquerque committed to shutting their doors on May 1st, and hundreds of workers participated in the national general strike to protest Trump’s anti-immigrant agenda and to highlight the economic contributions of immigrants. Nena’s Food was one of the first businesses that publicly vowed to close in solidarity with the national strike. Alma Martinez, a member of El CENTRO and the owner of Nena’s Food “My business, closed in solidarity with May Day. I also encouraged our employees to participate in the rally because it is vital to support Latino, immigrant, and refugee people. We, as communities, must raise our voices to show the government that we count, that we have economic, political, and social power. We need to continue fighting back in unity because the more of us participate, the more we benefit.”

The Trump Administration poses extraordinary threats to so many sectors of our society, and labor is not the exception. A big thank you to our allies for standing with our families from all the sectors of our community in resisting the politics of division, fear, and greed. We at El CENTRO are proud of all support provided by our own members, allied organizations, religious leaders, elected officials, labor unions, educators, businesses, workers, and families. Your support was essential in making our May Day Rise Up AB Rally a success. La lucha sigue, sigue!
Businesses Supporting MAY 1- RISE UP ABQ!

El CENTRO is proud of the support of the over 200 immigrant-owned businesses in Albuquerque that closed down on May Day (May 1st) International Workers’ Day. Recognizing that small businesses and their workers are the cornerstone of New Mexico’s economy, El CENTRO encourages Albuquerqueans to patronize the businesses that made a sacrifice on May Day in addition to other local businesses. Particularly, thanks to the following businesses for their donations in addition to closing down:

- Adobe Accounting & Financial Services, Inc.
- Angel Eyes
- Araceli’s Fashion
- Arriba Mexico
- Arturos Mexican Food
- Barbacoa El Primo
- Barbacoa y Birrieria La Pichorrita
- Belen Furniture
- Best Friend Grooming
- Betos Boots
- Betos Taller Mecanico
- Big Star Tire Shop
- Boost Mobile
- C & L Transmission
- California Oyster Bar
- Campos Automotive
- Candela Multi Fit
- Carla y Vital Silvia
- Carlos Tires Shop
- Carmen’s Cuts
- Carniceria Chihuahua
- Carniceria Cuauhtemoc
- Carniceria El Ranchito
- Carnicería El Rodeo
- Casa Mattress
- Casillas Tired Shop
- Cellular Doctor
- Chantel’s
- Chatos Tire Shop
- Chicharroneria Orozco
- Cielito Lindo
- City Motors Auto sales
- Cleaners of New Mexico
- Compu Express
- Cristina Beauty Salon
- Denali Furniture
- Discoteca Deportes
- Discoteca la Popular
- Dulceteria El Guero Loco
- Dulceteria el Karamelo
- Dulceteria Puebla
- Durangos Beauty salon
- El Bandido Restaurant
- El Bronco Restaurant
- El Girasol
- El Moreno
- El Payaso
- El Primo Hot Dog
- El Rey Del Brillo
- El Rey Del Pollo
- El Saxo Restaurant #1
- El Saxo Restaurant #2
- El Taco Riendo
- El Zarandego Mexican Seafood #1
- El Zarandego Mexican Seafood #2
- El Rey Del Pollo
- El Sarape Restaurant #1
- El Sarape Restaurant #2
- El Taco Riendo
- El Zarandego Mexican Seafood #1
- El Zarandego Mexican Seafood #2
- Elizabeth’s Salon
- El Super Market
- Erick’s Auto
- Estetica Gisell #1
- Estetica Gisell #2
- Estetica Gisell
- Filibertos #1 (Central)
- Filibertos #2 (Louisiana)
- Five Points Indoor Mercado
- Forastero Mexican Food #1
- Forastero Mexican Food #2
- Fridas Solon
- Furniture for you
- Gabuca
- Giromax
- Corditas Vale
- Hacienda de Villa
- Hamiel’s Bridal Quinseñeras
- Hands On Automotive Tech
- Indoor Mercado / El Rey del Brillo
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos /Audio-Novidades Ayry
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos / Centro De Apoyo
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos / Diseños Navil
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos / Divas NM
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos / Eight Planet Jeans
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos / El Conquistador
- Indoor mercados 5 puntos / Eros
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Fashion Dalary
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Guiselles Fashion
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Novedades Kereny
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Omnilife
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Petty Little Thing
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Restaurante de Comida
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos / Reyes Photography
- Indoor Mercado 5 Puntos / Vannys Boutique
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Dayanas Boutique
- Indoor mercado 5 puntos / Zapateria Lucy
- Indoor Mercado Local 1
- Indoor Mercado Local 2
- Indoor Mercado Local 3
- Indoor Mercado Local 4
- Indoor Mercado Local 5
- Indoor Mercado Local 6
- Indoor Mercado Local 7
- Indoor Mercado Local 8
- Indoor Mercado Local 9
- Indoor Mercado Local 10
- Indoor Mercado Local 11
- Indoor Soccer
- Juanita’s Restaurant
- Kike’s Electric Mechanic
- La Bodega
- La Bonita / Benezee
- La Bonita / Chikita Fashion
- La Bonita / Contacto Manager
- La Bonita / Libreria Cristina
- La Bonita / Martin PC
- La Bonita / Sector Wireless
- La Bonita / Secure Wireless
- La Bonita / Reparacion Y Venta
- La Cabañita
- La Cabaña del Sur
- La Flor de Michoacan
- La Michoacana
- La Michoacana del Sur
- La Michoacana Abq.
- La Michoacana de Paquime #1
- La Michoacana de Paquime #2
- La Michoacana de Paquime #3
- La Michoacana del Sur
- La Principal
- La Reyna De Michoacan
- Las Islitas Restaurant
- Lidas Fashion
- Llantera Louisiana
- Loli Pop
- Machitos el Guero
- Magys Beauty Salon
- Mariscos Las Islitas
- Martin Tire Shop
- Mary Salon
- Michoacana El Paraíso
- Microstuff
- Mis Estrellas
- Modas Princesa
- Mujeres En Acción
- Muñoz Auto Service
- Nahomis Fashion
- Nenas Food
- New Mexico Tires
- Nieves Beauty Salon
- Norteño Mexican Food
- North West Auto Sales L
- Paletiera El Tropico
- Paletiera Pop Fizz
- Panaderia El Dorado
- Panaderia Nizzy
- Panaderia Nizzy #2
- Panadería Pastelania
- Panchitos Restaurant
- Pasteles y mas
- Pat’s Cuts Salon
- Pescadería Guaymas
- Premier Group Insurance & Taxes
- Princess Accessories
- Puro Mexico
- Ramos Taxes
- Reparacion De Computadoras
- Restaurant La Isla
- Rio Bravo Tailor Shop
- Rio Grande Fruits and Vegetables
- Salon Paris
- Sanchez Tacos #1
- Sanchez Tacos #2
- Sanchez Tacos #3
- Sanchez Tacos #4
- Sanchez Tacos #5
- Sanchez Tacos #6
- Santos Complete Detail
- Selenes Novedades
- Señor Tortas
- Servicio de Grúa Alvarado
- Towing LLC
- Shurky’s
- Taco Mex #1
- Taco Mex #2
- Tacos Muñoz
- Taquería El Dorado
- Taquería el Rodeo
- Taquería Mexico
- Taquería Ranchero
- The One and Only
- Timo’s Auro Glass & Tinting
- Tortilleria Cuauhtemoc
- Tortillería la Poblana
- Victor’s Tire Shop
Organizations endorsing May Day with El CENTRO

Thank you to the following 41 organizations for endorsing the May Day Rally with El CENTRO in solidarity with the national general strike in protest to Trump’s targeting and persecution of immigrant communities.

More photos from MAY 1 - RISE UP ABQ!