



EL CENTRO
De Igualdad Y Derechos

NEW MEXICO
ASIAN FAMILY CENTER

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Lifting Up Immigrant Voices: Education Session for ABQ Mayoral Candidates

Albuquerque, N.M.– Five Albuquerque mayoral candidates joined over 150 city residents for the [‘Lifting Up Immigrant Voices: Education Session for ABQ Mayoral Candidates’](#) –Albuquerque’s first mayoral candidate educational session planned by and for immigrant communities– Friday night.

Since President Trump was elected, there has been a clear attack against immigrant communities –[raids targeting families](#), the promise of new privately run detention centers, increased border militarization, and now [the rescission of DACA](#). Although immigration has become a major issue in the political sphere, it is rare for candidates running for office to hear about immigrant communities’ contributions, challenges, strengths, dreams, values, and policy priorities first hand.

During today’s session, immigrant families had an opportunity to share stories about their contributions, struggles, uncertainty, fear, and resistance. These stories were followed by the unveiling of a collective policy platform put together by the immigrants’ rights organizations co-sponsoring the event. In addition, the public attending the educational session had an opportunity to directly interact with each of the mayoral candidates.

Mayoral candidates tonight’s educational session included Tim Keller, Brian Colón, Susan Wheeler, Dan Lewis, and Augustus "Gus" Pedrotty.

The event was co-sponsored by [Listo Nuevo México](#), the [NM Dream Team](#), [El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos](#), and [New Mexico Asian Family Center](#).

Photos and videos of today’s session can be found [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Marian Mendez, DACA beneficiary, and community organizer at EL CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos said,

"It was essential for El CENTRO to co-sponsor this educational session for mayoral candidates to urge candidates to again uphold our proud legacy in Albuquerque of passing policies which are conducive to public safety, upholding civil rights and integrating immigrants into the mainstream. It is important that they recognize our vast contributions, the need to protect our families in a new Trump era, and to support working families. Immigrant workers, families, & youth are all part of Albuquerque. New Mexico is our home and our voices and votes count!"

Kay Bounkeua, executive director for the NM Asian family Center, said,

"Tonight, our families came together in such a monumental way where their stories were front and center. This should be the norm as opposed to the exception. Mayoral candidates had a chance to hear the concerns of our communities, as well as the solutions that exist within all of us.

"By changing narratives through uplifting stories of diversity and cultural resiliency, we have the chance to elect a mayor who can build a genuine relationship with immigrant and refugee communities and take the lead from them, as opposed to running a top down government," she added.

Yazmin Irazoqui-Ruiz, DACA recipient, 3rd year medical student at UNM & DACA recipient, said,

"Today marked a crucial moment when our immigrant families shape a mayoral race focused on fighting to protect our families from deportations and to build beloved communities where we can thrive.

"Now more than ever, our families have embarked in ensuring the election of local officials who will pursue platforms created by and for immigrant families," she added.

Jazmin Coronel, DACA beneficiary, J.D. Economic Development Program Manager at Instituto Legal, Corinne Wolfe Fellow for Transformative Advocacy and member of the NM Dream Team, said,

"Our resiliency and love for our families pushes us to ensure the election of officials who will fight alongside our families and will prioritize and enact policies that will create safe environments for all immigrants in Albuquerque.

We: people of color, the differently abled, immigrants, refugees, LGBTQIA+ folks, youth, workers, parents, and all underrepresented communities are #HereToStay and will shape our spaces into ones which optimize safety, wellbeing, and accessible opportunities for all of us to thrive," she added.

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