



Monthly Newsletter

YOUR SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION

If you want a printed copy in English, please call us at 5 505-246-1627

We continue in the fight to protect our workers' rights: Defending our communities against wage theft.

El CENTRO and our members are pursuing litigation against the NM Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) to challenge the agency's failure to enforce our state's strong labor laws. On January 18th, El CENTRO, alongside victims of wage theft and organizational allies including: NM Comunidades en Acción y de FÉ (CAFÉ), Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ), and Somos Un Pueblo Unido, and the Center on Law and Poverty filed a lawsuit against DWS because the agency has, for years, refused to enforce our state's laws that protect hard-working people from 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. Earlier this month, El CENTRO published an article on the Huffington Post on wage theft in NM. You can read it here: <http://tiny.cc/5hnjoy>

After filing the case, we quickly won a court order prohibiting DWS from enforcing their one-year and \$10,000 limitations on wage theft, which enabled workers like Mr. Bravo to file their wage claims. Later, we defeated DWS' attempt to throw out our lawsuit, in another hard-earned victory for our working families. After that, DWS conceded that many of its policies were unlawful, and is now engaged in settlement negotiations with El CENTRO and the other allied organizations. Sabina Armendariz, a member of El CENTRO and participant in this campaign, explains, "together with El CENTRO we have been able to defend our communities against these abuses. Our rights must be respected, and we also deserve a fair and adequate enforcement process when employers break the law, but we are fighting back. We look forward to the meaningful collaboration between El CENTRO, allies, and DWS to ensure the rights of NM workers are protected."



For example, El CENTRO member Alvaro Bravo, who is a plaintiff in the lawsuit, was employed as a janitor in Albuquerque from April 2014 to September 2015 and was never paid overtime wages for the 56 hours he worked each week. Mr. Bravo attempted to file a wage claim at DWS in November 2016. However, DWS illegally refused to accept or investigate his wage claim because it was worth more than \$10,000 and because his last date of work was more than one year before the date he sought to file the claim.

Moving forward, it will be important, as ever, to inform all affected workers about their rights, continue to organize low-wage workers to grow our power, and keep collaborating with allies to monitor the implementation of the law.



Our ongoing fight to protect our families: Next steps with DACA

On September 5th, the Trump administration announced the end of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The deadline for current DACA beneficiaries to renew their DACA was October 5th and was limited to those whose work permit expired on or before March 5th, 2018. As a response to the Trump Administration, El CENTRO and the NM Immigrant Law Center united forces to offer free DACA workshops, and legal consultations to inform immigrant families about their civil and labor rights post-DACA two times a week during September. Also, on October 1st, Listo NM, an immigrant-based network of which El CENTRO is affiliated, hosted a free "than," a 12- Hour Clinic for DACA recipients eligible to renew their permits. At this event, 150 DACA Renewal Scholarships were available to cover the \$495 renewal fee. All funds are made possible thanks to The W.K. Kellogg Founda-



tion, NUSENDA Foundation, and United We Dream 'DACA Renewal Fund.'

Since ending DACA, the Trump administration has released a list of immigration principles that they wish to pass through Congress. These immigration principles are meant to kill any hope to achieve a comprehensive Dream Act. We need a clean Dream Act and will resist those politicians who want to use DREAMers as bargaining chips. We will continue pushing our Congressional delegation to stand with our communities to pass comprehensive immigration reform, protect DACA beneficiaries and their families, and to fight back against attacks on sanctuary cities and increased border and interior enforcement.

Let's be clear: NM is prepared to stand up for immigrant communities and lead in the Trump era. Our communities will continue to organize and work with allied elected officials to say: we are here to stay. Our community has said 'enough' and has taken a stand against Trumps deportation machine. We are ONE NM, and we are here to stay!



We will not give up in the fight for Earned Paid Sick Leave

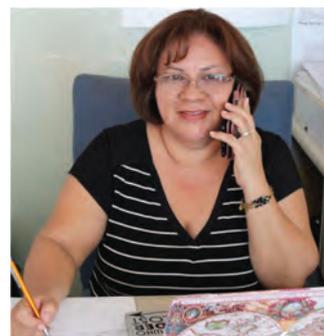
Aln the wake of losing the Healthy Workforce ABQ campaign by only 718 votes, El CENTRO and allies vow to continue the fight for paid sick leave. The earned paid sick ordinance was on the ballot in the municipal election on October 3rd and would have benefited over 107,000 workers in Albuquerque who currently don't have earned paid sick leave.

So what happened? Unscrupulous members of various business associations used scare tactics, spread misinformation and outright lies, and manipulated the ballot to confuse and disenfranchise voters intentionally.



But the fight didn't end on October 3rd! We will continue to work alongside New Mexican families and low-wage workers to grow our power and ensure we all have what we need to thrive. Our work will continue in Albuquerque and across the state. Our work didn't start at the ballot box. It won't end there, either. Join us at El CENTRO as we keep fighting for paid sick leave and for the policies that will help all New Mexican families thrive.

In the months preceding the election, our members spent countless hours calling hundreds of voters, canvassing, and telling their stories in the media to urge voters to vote "YES" on the ordinance. We are proud of the fact that through this campaign, the HWF coalition knocked on approximately 90,000 doors in neighborhoods across the city and identified thousands of voters who support paid sick leave and workers' rights issues. Together with our coalition partners, our members talked to more than 41,331 people by phone. We identified and grew leaders in our communities—from low-wage workers to small business owners to teachers to healthcare professionals. That is an excellent base for the fight ahead!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

25th Annual South Valley Marigold Parade

WHEN: Saturday Nov 5th, 12:00 PM
 WHERE: 2001 N. Centro Familiar SW, 87105
 DESCRIPTION: Participate in El CENTRO's float at the Marigold Parade and Celebration. The theme of our car is "Trump cannot tear down what we have built up in NM."

RIGHTS OF PASSAGE:FUNDRAISER EI CENTRO

WHEN: Saturday 11th of Nov from 12 to 6:30 pm
 WHERE: Warehouse Five O'eight 508 1st St NW
 DESCRIPTION: A fundraising celebration for El CENTRO. Collaborative Workshops from 12-2pm and a vast variety show 2-6:30 pm, filled with fantastical local celebrities!

WORKERS' RIGHTS ORIENTATIONS

WHEN: Nov 13 & 27, & Dec 11, 5:30 to 7 pm
 WHERE: 714 4th St SW 87102
 DESCRIPTION: Come to our 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 in advance to reserve your spot, 505-247-1023

CIVIL RIGHTS WORKSHOPS

WHEN: Contact us to schedule and sign up
 DESCRIPTION: Learn about your civil rights with ICE/police, and how to join the movement to fight back! Contact us at 505-246-1627 or sign up on line at www.elcentronm.org

LEGAL CONSULTATIONS-THE NM IMMIGRANT LAW CENTER

WHEN: Every Wednesday, 1 to 5 pm
 WHERE: 714 4th St. SW 87102
 DESCRIPTION: Do you need help with any immigration related issues or obtaining a background check? Come on Wednesdays to sign up for a free consultation with an immigration attorney.

NM IMMIGRANT LAW CENTER PHONE CONSULTATIONS

WHEN: Every Friday, 11 am to 1 pm
 DESCRIPTION: Free legal consults!
 Call 505-247-1023

For more information about events and to check out our complete Know Your Rights with ICE and Law Enforcement Toolkit at our Website!



PARTICIPATE IN EL MARIGOLD PARADE WITH EL CENTRO

THIS YEAR WE HAVE THE HONOR TO PARTICIPATE WITH OUR OWN FLOAT
OUR THEME IS "TRUMP CANNOT TEAR DOWN WHAT WE HAVE BUILT UP IN NM"

WHEN: SUNDAY 5TH OF NOVEMBER, MEET EL CENTRO'S CREW AT 12:00.
WHERE: SOUTH VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER, 2001 N. CENTRO FAMILIAR, SW, 87105



Rights of Passage: Fundraiser and Celebration for El CENTRO

When: Saturday 11th of November, from 12 to 6:30 pm
 Where: Warehouse Five O'eight 508 1st St NW, Albuquerque 87102

---Collaborative Workshops from 12-2pm
 ---Variety of shows from 2-6:30 pm filled with local talents such as Sina Soul Queen & The Sound, Blesinfinite, Dre Z, Wae Fonkey, Circulo, Ashley "Saywut" Moyer, Zack Freeman and MORE!

Join us for this fundraising celebration for El CENTRO organized by one of our allies Krysia Weaver along with other local businesses and organizations such as Prismatic Coffee, Warehouse Five O'eight, SWOP, Zendo Coffee.

Click here to download our flyer: <http://elcentronm.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/RightsOfPassage5.jpg>
<http://tiny.cc/2ip9ny>

This will be an all afternoon-long event, with collaborative workshops and performances throughout the afternoon:

RIGHTS OF PASSAGE
FUNDRAISER FOR EL CENTRO DE IGUALDAD Y DERECHOS
 Defending Worker & Immigrant Rights
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2017, 12PM-6:30PM
WAREHOUSE 508: 508 1ST ST. NW, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

\$10-\$20 sliding scale
 Seniors and Kids under 10 are free!

12pm-2pm: Workshops: Garden/Yoga/Percussion/Poetry/Screenprinting
2pm-4pm: Zia Queens, Cypher / Battle with Cash and prizes: special guest judges.
4pm-6pm: Performances by: Sina Soul Queen & The Sound, BlesInfinite, Dre Z, Capoeira Girassol, Wae Fonkey, Circulo Solar Ollin Xochipilli, WorldPlay Movement, Ashley "Saywut" Moyer, Zack Freeman and MORE
2-6:30pm: Live Art & Auction by Local Artists

Luchador del Mes: Christian Nuñez, a low-wage worker, DACA beneficiary, and dedicated hard working member

Every month we highlight the work and the story of one of our active members. This month we highlight Christian Nuñez. Christian is a proud low-wage worker, landscaper and DACA beneficiary. He became involved with El CENTRO back in 2011 when he was taking GED classes with Encuentro. Christian narrates that he was recruited by some of El CENTRO's organizers during one of his classes. Around that time, El CENTRO had organized multiple direct actions to pressure the Obama administration for administrative relief to keep NM families together. Soon after, he became an active member of our Workers' Committee.

When DACA passed in 2012, Christian was able to obtain a work permit and access opportunities that otherwise he could not. He speaks to the consequences that Trump ending DACA will have on his family "Since DACA, I have been able to secure a stable and reliable higher paying job and take out loans-- contributing more to the economy. I am in the process of becoming a commercial truck driver at the same time that my family and I are trying to buy a house. Although Trump's announcement is a blow to our movement, I know that there is strength and resilience in our communities to keep each other safe and to fight back."



As a low-wage worker, Christian was particularly interested in fighting for the rights of other working families. He explains that "it is extremely vital for each of us to be actively involved in protecting our immigrant communities. Being part of El CENTRO has allowed me and my family to connect with other working families and to create support networks."

Christian encourages fellow members to continue being involved in our fight "I encourage other members to be active participants with El CENTRO because we are stronger together. Having a support community is extremely important for the well-being of all our families." Dedicated members like Christian motivate us at El CENTRO to continue the work we do. Thank you, Christian!



Junta de Membresía, municipal election results and next steps in the fight for earned paid sick leave

Many thanks to all for attending our membership meeting! At this meeting, we analyzed the municipal election results on earned paid sick leave and mayoral race. Together, we discussed our next steps fighting for earned paid sick leave and how we will continue defending our families.

