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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Healthy Workforce ABQ to Continue Fight for Workers' Right to Earn Paid Sick Leave

ALBUQUERQUE, NM—Healthy Workforce ABQ, the campaign behind the proposed ordinance for earned sick days, vowed today to continue its fight to ensure that all workers have access to earned paid sick leave, after unofficial election returns showed a narrow margin of 718 votes against the ordinance.

“No one should have to choose between a paycheck and their health or taking care of a sick child,” said Andrea Serrano, Executive Director of OLÉ. “Throughout this campaign, we talked with workers, families, and small business owners who agreed Albuquerque workers need the right to earn sick days. But this ordinance faced great odds. Well-connected business interests undertook a campaign of misinformation that confused both the press and voters about the provisions of the law. The measure was relegated to the back of the ballot, without a summary, in illegible seven point font that many people could not read. This election doesn’t change the fact that everyone agrees Albuquerque workers should have the basic right to earn sick leave. We will continue to fight for it.”

Local community organizations have been working tirelessly to educate the public on the earned sick leave initiative since last summer, when over 24,000 voters in Albuquerque signed the petition to get it on the ballot.

“I have never had earned paid sick days. I have a child with autism, and many times I have had to choose between taking him to his medical appointments or not receiving a day's worth of pay,” said Edgar Salinas, a low-wage immigrant worker and an active member of El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos. “My situation is not unique. Tens of thousands of Albuquerque workers are taking care of children and elderly parents. It is reprehensible that well-funded groups, driven by ideology, instead of sound policy, choose to undermine working families’ ability to care for one another rather than strengthen and support the workers who are a cornerstone of the economy. We, Albuquerque’s working families, will continue to fight for our rights to support our families and strengthen Albuquerque. La lucha sigue!”

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Healthy Workforce ABQ is supported by Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ), Strong Families New Mexico, El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos, New Mexico Working Families Party, the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, the Center for Civic Policy, and Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP).