

Immigrants' Rights, Civil Rights and Wildlife Advocates Call on NM Senators to Oppose Border Militarization Scheme That Would Harm NM Communities

"No Boots, No Beds, No Wall," say border advocates.

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ALBUQUERQUE, NM -- Today, a statewide network of immigrant rights, civil rights, and wildlife organizations delivered citizen petitions signed by over 3,000 New Mexicans to the offices of U.S. Senator Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, calling on them to oppose President Trump's FY 2018 DHS budget.

Last week, Republican leadership in the Senate Appropriations Committee introduced their DHS funding proposal, setting up a December debate over whether to grant President Trump's draconian request to increase border militarization, expand the border wall, hire more deportation agents, and further the mass incarceration of immigrants in private prisons.

Today's petition delivery was co-organized by the ACLU of New Mexico (ACLU-NM), Comunidades en Acción y de Fe (NM CAFÉ), El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos (EL CENTRO), Somos Un Pueblo Unido (SOMOS), and the Southwest Environmental Center (SWEC), with support from the New Mexico Dream Team, New Mexico Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice and Rio Grande chapter of the Sierra Club.

If passed, President Trump's proposed DHS budget would directly threaten New Mexicans' civil and human rights, our economy, our lands and wildlife, and come at the same time the Administration is attempting to make devastating cuts to healthcare, education, and other programs that are vital for New Mexico Families.

Participants in today's press conference also called on Congress to pass a clean DREAM Act by the end of the year. More than 10,000 DACA recipients have lost their status as a result of Trump's decision to manufacture a crisis by rescinding the popular program in September.

Passing a clean DREAM Act without interior or border enforcement tradeoffs is the only way to protect Dreamers, half of whom live in southwest Border States. Deals that protect young immigrants at the expense of their families and friends run counter to the spirit of the Dream Act and our values.

"President Trump's proposal to expand Border Patrol and unleash an agency with a history of racial profiling and excessive force will further erode the freedoms and rights of tens of millions of people in border communities," stated Cynthia Pompa, field organizer for the ACLU of Texas Regional Center for Border Rights. "Our communities are strongest when everyone's basic rights and dignity are respected. New Mexico's Senators can and should act as a check on Trump's deportation force by investing in oversight and accountability for the agents we already have."

"Immigrant families can no longer wait for justice. Our border families need true champions in D.C.," added Sara Melton, community organizer with NM CAFÉ. "Extraordinary times demand extraordinary efforts. We call on Senator Heinrich and Senator Udall to take bold leadership on behalf of immigrant families and publicly denounce any additional funding towards President Trump's cruel and immoral detention and deportation of our families and neighbors."

"We will not tolerate Trump's anti-immigrant white supremacist agenda which aims to criminalize immigrant communities and separate our families," said **Marian J. Mendez-Cera**, DACA beneficiary, and community organizer at El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos. "Investing in Trump's deportation force is against our New Mexican values and principles and would be devastating to our local economies, in which immigrant workers proudly play a vital role. El CENTRO calls for our Congressional delegation to reject provisions in Trump's budget which would increase border militarization, expand private prisons for immigrants, exponentially grow DHS's deportation force, and which aim to coerce local governments into implementing unconstitutional deportation programs. As a state, we rejected Trump in the elections. We fought against Susana Martínez's anti-immigrant platform. Across the state, our communities are organizing and working with local elected officials to pass policies to protect our families. We will continue to build on this legacy of fighting for policies that integrate immigrants into the mainstream and we call on our Congressional delegation to do the same in Washington. "

"Trump's wall will not stop humans determined to cross the border but it will be devastating for the border region's rich diversity of wildlife," said **Kevin bixby**, executive director, southwest environmental center. "Hundreds of species such as endangered jaguars, Mexican wolves and Sonoran pronghorns will be cut off from access to the water, food and potential mates they need to survive. The wall is the most visible symbol of a larger agenda which amounts to the militarization of border communities and that is why we stand today with immigration rights advocates in calling on our senators to reject funding for any part of it."

"As conservationists we are united with immigrants rights groups in opposition not just to a wall that harms our landscapes, habitats and wildlife, but we are united in opposition to policies, technology and militarization of our border communities that leads to racial profile and separation of families. Last week in a deeply cynical act, the Trump Administration tied aid for hurricane victims in Puerto Rico, Florida, and Houston to \$2 billion in funds for a border wall and funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) again showing that the President is willing to put ineffective, damaging ideologies before real human need. This is unacceptable and we call on our Senators to reject funding not just for the wall but also for the militarization of our border communities," said **Camilla Feibelman**, Director of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

"President Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions are making good on their promise to target, incarcerate and deport our families," said Emmanuelle "Neza" Leal-Sanchez, Communications Coordinator for *Somos Un Pueblo Unido*. "They have already increased enforcement activities across the country like in Roswell with a new ICE processing center, are preying on economically struggling rural counties with new private prison contracts like in Cibola with a new for-profit immigrant detention center, and are doing everything they can to prolong our incarceration so that private prison companies like CoreCivic can profit. The consequences for our state and families are too large, we need to end the expansion of this pipeline to prolonged incarceration and separation of our families by not giving the administration one more dollar."

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