



Monthly Newsletter

YOUR SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION

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D.C takeover 2017' for a Clean Dream Act

On December 16-23 hundreds of undocumented youth and allies took over D.C with the urgency to pressure Congress to pass a Clean Dream Act. After Trump's announcement on October 5 of the removal of DACA, millions of undocumented youth became vulnerable to deportation, face losing their jobs, and in some states, losing their ability to obtain a higher education. Youth from all over the country gathered to lay out their most urgent priorities and concerns to their senators.

Every day with, 14,000 having already lost their protection and 850 more losing it every week, the urgency for a Clean Dream Act to pass grows. DACA was a temporary executive order issued by president Obama on June 2012 to protect qualifying youth from deportation also helping them qualify to attend college, work and become homeowners. From just New Mexico around 200 youth were invited by the NM Dream Team/United We Dream to participate in the D.C action.

In D.C the youth took over the offices, hallways and streets: at first in silence and then chanting for a Clean Dream Act. Some of the youth took over the senators' offices, completely blocking anyone's ability to enter or leave. The youth took turns telling their stories of how losing DACA will impact them and their families.

Marian Mendez, Hope Alvarado, Rosalinda Dorado, Eduardo Casas, Santiago Carrillo, Sergio Baca, Lori Perez and Zia Martinez from El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos attended the action in D.C representing El CENTRO. Part of the action was to take over the office of Senators, Tom Udall's where they told their stories and voiced their concerns. Just like Mendez other youth stated the days remaining until their DACA expires. Even when the youth were expressing their fears and in tears they would keep chanting from the top of their lungs gathering courage from the rest of the youth and unify as one voice. Although the Clean Dream Act was not added to the budget the fight is not over we are encouraging folks to keep pressuring congress to pass a Clean Dream Act and to support NM Dream Team in the fight.



El CENTRO's Cumbre de Liderazgo 2018: Building on ABQ's Strong Legacy of Resistance

Los líderes inmigrantes de todo ABQ se reunieron para un día de aprendizaje, intercambio y desarrollo de habilidades de participación cívica. El tema de este año fue "Desarrollar el Privilegiado Legado de Resistencia e Integración de Inmigrantes de ABQ". El CENTRO estaba orgulloso de tener al nuevo alcalde, Tim Keller, 4 ayuntamientos y 2 comisionados de la ciudad.

Marian Mendez Cera, organizadora comunitaria de El CENTRO explicó la importancia de Cumbre: "dada la agenda política anti-inmigrante tóxica de la administración Trump, las comunidades inmigrantes quieren garantizar que los funcionarios electos trabajen con nuestras comunidades para mantener a nuestras familias seguras durante la era de Trump.

Nos comprometeremos con líderes inmigrantes y funcionarios electos a medida que compartamos una visión para un ABQ en el que nuestras políticas sean

conducentes a proteger a nuestras familias, defender nuestros derechos civiles, aumentar las oportunidades para los trabajadores de salarios bajos y promover la integración de inmigrantes".

Gracias a los miembros y aliados que llegaron a Cumbre el sábado por la mañana y también un agradecimiento al funcionario electo que se tomó el tiempo de venir y escuchar nuestras historias y preocupaciones; El concejal Paterson Davis, Isaac Benton, Cynthia Borrego, Klarissa Peña y el comisionado Hart Stebbins y el recién elegido alcalde Tim Keller. Los miembros están haciendo responsables a sus funcionarios electos en su palabra de las políticas aprobadas para Ciudades de Santuario y Días Pagados por Enfermedad.



Victory! Our New Mexican Immigrant Workers Fight to Recuperate Stolen Wages and Won!

On Dec 13th, Judge Sedillo of the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court ruled in favor of workers members of El CENTRO who suffered wage theft at Hope Head Start, a childcare facility in ABQ. Judge Sedillo ordered Hope Head Start to pay former employees Sabina Armendariz's and Magdalena's wages owed, including statutory damages.

Wage theft is against the law and includes the failure to pay the mandated minimum wage, forcing workers to work off the clock. It also includes the non-payment of overtime, the nonpayment of all hours worked and the misclassification of workers. The damage from wage theft isn't limited to our workers and their families as it robs our local, state, and federal governments of taxpayers' money to be used for services we rely on. Also, wage theft creates an unfair playing field for honest employers.

Sabina and Magdalena worked for more than a year, along with Sabina's daughter, Cindy, and sister, Nirma, at the child care center based in ABQ. All four reported a pattern of late payment for their work, often weeks at a time. In early November 2015, they were effectively forced to resign, because they had not been paid for more than three weeks and could not afford to work for free. They filed claims with the NM Department of Workforce Solutions. As their case made its way -



Settlement in lawsuit against DWS ensures enforcement of NM wage payment laws

While low-wage immigrant workers successfully organized in NM to pass some of the strongest wage enforcement laws in the country, the governmental departments responsible for enforcing these laws, under the leadership of Governor Susana Martinez, have for years failed to implement them.

El CENTRO's members have fought, along with a coalition of allies to fight against wage theft. On January 18 2016, El CENTRO, along with workers who are victims of wage theft, NM Comunidades en Acción y de Fé (CAFÉ), Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLE), and Somos Un Pueblo Unido, filed a lawsuit against the state agency responsible for enforcing NM's wage protection laws, the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), demanding that it does its job.

On December 20th, we held a press conference in front of DWS to declare the hard-earned victory for our working families by settling on an agreement with DWS. The class action settlement agreement details new rules and obligations the Labor Relations Division (LRD) of DWS must follow in its investigation and enforcement of wage claims. It will also enable some workers with prior, unresolved wage claims to seek a new investigation.

LRD has also taken the following steps to end the practices challenged in the lawsuit:

- LRD will now investigate all wage claims, regardless of their dollar value;
- LRD will take enforcement action on wage claims going back three years, or longer if the violation is part of a continuing course of conduct;

through the Department, they experienced needless delays in processing due to language access difficulties and procedural barriers.

As active members of El CENTRO, Sabina and other of our members organized to bring their case to light. The severe and immediate impact wage theft had on their lives inspired them to work with El CENTRO, not only to resolve their cases but to strengthen protections for all our New Mexican workers by reforming DWS' regulations and implementation procedures. The ruling by the Metropolitan Court on Dec 13th closes a chapter for the four and represents a significant victory sending a message to unscrupulous employers, "ya basta!" The next step for the workers and El CENTRO is to ensure that Hope Head Start complies with the court order and pays the amounts ordered by the courts.

Low-Wage workers are more organized than ever. Sabina, along with other workers, are successfully fighting back, "together with El CENTRO we have been able to organize to confront these abuses and push to hold accountable the very institutions entrusted with enforcing the laws. We will continue to organize with other workers because the rights of all New Mexican workers must be respected."



-Employers who fail to pay minimum or overtime wages must pay damages to wage claimants, calculated at three times the value of the unpaid wages, when a case reaches the administrative enforcement phase and is not resolved in settlement;

-LRD will no longer close wage claims for impermissible procedural reasons; and

-LRD will provide language access services to all wage claimants who need it, by requesting each claimant's language preference on the claim form, providing interpretation in each telephonic and in-person interaction, translating all form letters and claim forms into Spanish, allowing claimants to fill out claim forms in any language, and offering an interpreter to anyone who telephones the agency.

At this press conference, one of our immigrant working mothers, Sabina Armendariz, spoke on her experience as a victim of wage theft and her experience organizing with other workers and El CENTRO to eliminate wage theft in NM. She explains our next steps organizing against wage theft "This settlement is a hard-earned victory for New Mexican working families, and now we will pivot to ensure this settlement, and all NM's labor laws, are being implemented correctly. We will continue organizing alongside other low-wage workers, and we will keep using everything at our disposal to fight for workers' rights so that all New Mexicans can provide for their families."



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WORKERS' RIGHTS ORIENTATIONS

WHEN: Dec 11, Jan 22nd, & Feb 5th 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!

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

- REMAIN SILENT**
If you are stopped by a police officer, jail personnel or another officer, or ICE if you have the right to remain silent—ever. You do not have to give information about your country of origin, immigration status, or social security number. You do not have to say or do anything that can be used against you. You can give the officer your know-your-rights card.
- IN YOUR HOME**
You have the right to not open your door to law enforcement, including ICE. All law enforcement needs a warrant signed by a judge to enter your home (an arrest warrant or deportation order is not sufficient).
- IN YOUR CAR**
Any officer who stops you. Show your driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance if requested. Without probable cause, a search warrant, or your permission, an officer does not have the right to inspect your vehicle.
- NEVER SHOW FALSE DOCUMENTS
DON'T SIGN AWAY YOUR RIGHTS!**
Do not give false information, including about being a citizen. Do not show any forged, altered, or incomplete documents or paperwork that can be used to identify your country of origin/citizenship. Do not sign any documents that you do not understand or without talking to a lawyer.
- REMAIN CALM!**
If you run, you may be giving the officer a reason to arrest you. Calmly ask the officer, "Why was I stopped?" If he/she responds, "NO," ask "Can I leave?" If they say "yes," remain silent and give them your know-your-rights card. If you are arrested, don't resist, remain silent, and contact your attorney.
- IF YOU ARE DETAINED!**
Ask if you are under arrest. If so, you have the right to know the reason. Do not resist an arrest.
- You have the right to remain silent, not reveal your country of origin, or your immigration status, or your legal status (including if you are in [il] and receive a call from an ICE officer or you are interrogated in person or by video).
 - Do not lie or present false papers.
 - Do not sign anything if you do not understand it or without talking to a lawyer about your rights.
- USE "MOBILE JUSTICE-NEW MEXICO!"**
Download the mobile application of the ACLU NM to be able to record and keep track of any incident with law enforcement or federal agents.
Updated March 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION: elcentronm.org (505) 246-1627



Throughout 2017, we fought back tirelessly against Trump's attacks against our communities and to advance workers' rights. At this event, we celebrated and recognized our accomplishments and recharged our batteries for the fight ahead.

Norma Gomez, an active member of the Workers' Committee, enjoyed El CENTRO's posada as a celebration of our resistance "I had an amazing time celebrating our efforts as an immigrant community. This event brought us together as part of a bigger family that fights for the rights of our working immigrant families."

Entertainment included: DJ, Santa Claus, music, baile folklórico, raffle, Lollipop (professional clown), photobooth, food, piñata, baile y karaoke!



Luchadora del Mes: Nallely Ramos, low-wage worker, immigrant mother, and defensora de familia

Every month we highlight the work and the story of one of our active members. This month we highlight Nallely Ramos. She is a proud low-wage worker, mother, and an advocate for the protection of our immigrant families. As part of Defensores de Familia (Family Defenders), Nallely has been a spokesperson for El CENTRO; she delivered a powerful message focused on immigrant families during the 2017's ABQ Women March. She has also given Know-Your-Rights workshops throughout ABQ, informing families about their rights and ways to continue organizing against deportations.

Nallely came to NM thirteen years ago, and she fell in love with the state and its people. She became involved with El CENTRO after participating in a Know-Your-Rights workshop because she was interested in becoming engaged in empowering her communities. She explains that "my work with El CENTRO has empowered me, and I have learned to become an active member of my community by informing others about their rights." As an immigrant mother and an immigrant rights' activist, Nallely sends the-

message to Trump that "being a woman is not a sin and the color of our skin and ethnic background are not reasons to discriminate. I want to tell Mr. Trump that we, immigrants, are here to work hard and to make our families thrive. We are here to stay."

Nallely adds "an attack on the refugee community, DACA, and immigrants is an attack on everyone. We cannot let this happen. We, at CENTRO, will continue to organize and grow power with our communities. And we will fight against Trump's deportation machine and his hate agenda. Que Viva NM! Our resistance continues! ¡Si se puede!" We, at El CENTRO, recognize that our strength has always come and will continue to come directly from our members. Members like Nallely make our victories possible. Thank you! If you would like to get involved or learn more about our Defensores de Familia group or our civil rights workshops, contact Fabiola Bawden at fbawden@yahoo.com, Marian Méndez at mmendez_elcentro@yahoo.com, or call 505-246-1627.

