Congratulations Albuquerque families! On Monday, March 26th the Finance and Government Operations committee voted in favor of Resolution 18-7 to strengthen Albuquerque’s immigrant-friendly status. The final vote was 4:0 with all the members of the committee voting to approve the resolution. Thank you to Councilors Peña, Davis, Sanchez & Winter for standing with our communities! The resolution will now have a hearing with the full council.

Albuquerque passed its first immigrant-friendly resolution in 2000. Over 70 immigrant and faith-based organizations, educators, civil liberties and legal advocacy, domestic violence, and sexual assault service providers, and business leaders endorsed the resolution.

By voting “YES” on R-18-7, the Albuquerque City Council Finance & Government Operations Committee recognized the countless contributions that immigrant families, workers, and businesses provide to our state and that the City is willing to do its part to protect Albuquerque families, workers, businesses, and our economy.

Edgar Salinas, a low-wage immigrant worker, father and workers’ justice organizer with El CENTRO "My wife and I decided to make this city our home over a decade ago and have come to learn about and feel pride around its legacy of standing for the rights of our immigrant and refugee communities. This is particularly important to us as we work hard every day for a better future for our children. As an immigrant worker and proud Burqueño, I urge you all to support resolution 18-7. It will strengthen the trust between workers and the City, creating a safer space to report labor abuses.”

Marian Mendez-Cera, a community organizer at El CENTRO, explains “we recognize that R-18-7 won’t prevent all ICE activity in Albuquerque, but being an immigrant-friendly City isn’t just a policy, it is a commitment to our communities. It means that we will hold our elected officials accountable to do their part to ensure that the City isn’t complicit in enforcing federal deportation programs. It means that they should continue to work “mano-a-mano” with the community to put community-driven solutions in place.”

Lucía Hernández, a grandmother, a CNM student, an immigrant worker and member of El CENTRO stated, “I have met fellow immigrant mothers, survivors of domestic violence who are fearful of seeking help from local law enforcement agents because they have the perception that they have to continue enduring abuse rather than risk being separated from their children,. Resolution 18-7 will make Albuquerque a city safer for all.”

Stay tuned— la lucha sigue. To get involved in the fight against Trump’s anti-immigrant agenda, contact El CENTRO: 505-246-1627.

Congratulations Albuquerque families! On Monday, March 26th the Finance and Government Operations committee voted in favor of Resolution 18-7 to strengthen Albuquerque’s immigrant-friendly status. The final vote was 4:0 with all the members of the committee voting to approve the resolution. Thank you to Councilors Peña, Davis, Sanchez & Winter for standing with our communities! The resolution will now have a hearing with the full council.

Albuquerque passed its first immigrant-friendly resolution in 2000. Over 70 immigrant and faith-based organizations, educators, civil liberties and legal advocacy, domestic violence, and sexual assault service providers, and business leaders endorsed the resolution.

By voting “YES” on R-18-7, the Albuquerque City Council Finance & Government Operations Committee recognized the countless contributions that immigrant families, workers, and businesses provide to our state and that the City is willing to do its part to protect Albuquerque families, workers, businesses, and our economy.

Edgar Salinas, a low-wage immigrant worker, father and workers’ justice organizer with El CENTRO "My wife and I decided to make this city our home over a decade ago and have come to learn about and feel pride around its legacy of standing for the rights of our immigrant and refugee communities. This is particularly important to us as we work hard every day for a better future for our children. As an immigrant worker and proud Burqueño, I urge you all to support resolution 18-7. It will strengthen the trust between workers and the City, creating a safer space to report labor abuses.”

Marian Mendez-Cera, a community organizer at El CENTRO, explains “we recognize that R-18-7 won’t prevent all ICE activity in Albuquerque, but being an immigrant-friendly City isn’t just a policy, it is a commitment to our communities. It means that we will hold our elected officials accountable to do their part to ensure that the City isn’t complicit in enforcing federal deportation programs. It means that they should continue to work “mano-a-mano” with the community to put community-driven solutions in place.”

Lucía Hernández, a grandmother, a CNM student, an immigrant worker and member of El CENTRO stated, “I have met fellow immigrant mothers, survivors of domestic violence who are fearful of seeking help from local law enforcement agents because they have the perception that they have to continue enduring abuse rather than risk being separated from their children,. Resolution 18-7 will make Albuquerque a city safer for all.”

Stay tuned— la lucha sigue. To get involved in the fight against Trump’s anti-immigrant agenda, contact El CENTRO: 505-246-1627.
Wage Theft Lawsuit Concludes in Win for New Mexico Workers!

On March 9th, Judge David Thomson approved the settlement of a class-action lawsuit, ensuring greater enforcement of New Mexico wage and hour laws. Over a year ago, in January, 2017, El CENTRO members, along with Somos Un Pueblo Unido, New Mexico Comunidades en Acción y de Fé (CAFÉ), and Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ), announced a lawsuit against the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) for its systemic failure to investigate and resolve unpaid wage claims.

The class action settlement agreement is a win for New Mexico workers and is the result of years of work by low-wage workers and workers’ rights organizations who advocated for the passage of a 2009 law, spearheaded by Somos un Pueblo Unido, imposing stronger anti-wage theft protections.

Sabina Armendariz, a low-wage immigrant worker, single mother, and member of El CENTRO explains “this settlement agreement is an example of what can happen when low-wage workers organize to confront labor abuses and work to hold accountable the very government institutions entrusted with enforcing the laws. We encourage other workers to come forward and present their cases.”

Now that the court has issued final approval of the settlement agreement, DWS will begin accepting requests from workers to re-investigate wage claims that DWS did not initially accept or correctly investigate. This includes workers who experienced the following problems:

--DWS rejected or returned the claim form without investigating the claim;
--DWS rejected, closed, or incompletely investigated the wage claim because of an unlawful $10,000 cap or one-year time limit;
--DWS decided in favor of the employer for an improper jurisdictional reason;
--DWS closed the wage claim after the employee or employer missed a deadline or hearing.

The state has now implemented the three-year statute of limitations that the state Legislature approved in 2009. This means, if you can claim your case of wage theft if it happened up to 3 years prior. That time limitation is indefinite when a violation is part of continuing conduct.

El CENTRO, a worker community organization, works with workers to address inequities in the workplace. El CENTRO seeks to advance the rights of immigrants and all workers in the workplace. El CENTRO works in concert with other community organizations to ensure that businesses, workers, and immigrant families know their rights. El CENTRO and the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center will continue to host I-9 Audit and ICE Enforcement workshops for those businesses that want to learn more about their right rights and how to protect their businesses and workforces. If you are a small local business owner and would like to join our network to protect our immigrant communities and for a toolkit regarding I-9 audits or request a workshop, go to www.elcentronm.org or contact El CENTRO at (505) 246-1627.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP MEETING
WHEN: Monday April 9th, 6:00 to 8:30 pm
WHERE: 714 4th St SW 87102
DESCRIPTION: Come and discuss our next steps in the fight for sanctuary in Albuquerque to protect our families and how to continue protecting our workers rights.

WORKERS’ RIGHTS ORIENTATIONS
WHEN: April 2, 16, 30 & May 14 5:30 to 7 pm
WHERE: 714 4th St SW 87102
DESCRIPTION: Come to our orientations 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 make a family emergency plan 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!

Luchadora del Mes: Hilaria Martinez
activist, immigrant mother, and volunteer at APS

Every month we highlight the work and the story of one of our active members. This month we highlight Hilaria Martinez. She is a proud mother, a student, and an advocate for fighting to protect our families and communities. Hilaria has worked practically as a full-time volunteer in her daughter’s school and has been actively involved organizing fundraisers for Albuquerque Public Schools. In recent months she has participated in meetings with city officials and El CENTRO to ensure that Albuquerque strengthens its status as an immigrant-friendly city.

Hilaria became an active member with El CENTRO after she organized a vigil and a press conference to demand ICE out of Albuquerque and for her husband’s release after he was detained by ICE at a routine check with his probation officer. She explains that “I do not want to let this happen to other families. Our community supports the economy; we work under the sun, we work overtime, we do the jobs that nobody else wants to do.” Hilaria is an inspiring woman and a clear example of the contributions our families make to New Mexico. Hilaria encourages other members of El CENTRO to remain active in la lucha “I urge the community not to be afraid, to keep fighting together, supporting each other. United we cannot be defeated.”

We, at El CENTRO, recognize that our strength has always come and will continue to come directly from our members. Thank you! If you would like to get involved or learn more about our Civil Rights workshops, contact Fabiola Bawden at fbawden@yahoo.com, Marian Méndez at mmendez_elcentro@yahoo.com, or call 505-246-1627.