



Monthly Newsletter

YOUR SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION

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Fight for Sanctuary in Albuquerque Continues!

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 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.



El CENTRO Members Organizing with Local Business Owners and Workers against Trump's Deportation Machine

At a press conference on Thursday 22nd of March, El CENTRO, along with elected officials, small business owners, and community and economic development leaders denounced the uptick of ICE activity in Albuquerque and announced the next steps to protect our Albuquerque families, businesses, and economy.

In December of last year, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced that it would be ramping up worksite enforcement with a goal of increasing workforce enforcement by 400%. In the past weeks, ICE has begun targeting locally-owned businesses in Albuquerque and other New Mexico cities. Immigrant-owned businesses in New Mexico have created jobs, generated millions of dollars in local tax revenue and revitalized many of our cities business corridors. They are the bread and butter of hundreds of immigrant families who enroll their children in our schools, buy and build homes, and contribute to weaving the economic and social fabric of our neighborhoods and community gathering spaces.

As a response to the increase of ICE activity in our communities, El CENTRO and the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center hosted a series of workshops where business owners and workers had the opportunity to learn about their rights

during an I-9 inspection and discuss strategies for how the community can organize to protect businesses, workers and families in Albuquerque. At our workshop for businesses, over 40 local business owners came together to decide how to organize.

Luis Angel Mendez Serrano, owner of the local restaurant Nena's food, father of five, and a member of El CENTRO's network of local business owners "It is our responsibility as business owners to ensure that we have the tools to protect our workers and to ensure that our workers can protect their families. I urge other small business owners to get informed: we don't have to let ICE intimidate us, let them into private spaces at our worksite or allow them to interrogate our employees."

Marian Mendez-Cera, a community organizer at El CENTRO, stated, "we are working together with elected officials and small business owners to ensure that the civil rights of local workers and business owners are respected."

El CENTRO is exploring private/public partnerships with APS, the City of Albuquerque, the Bernalillo County Commission, and business

and economic developments associations 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.



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 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 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.

(LRD) of DWS to re-open their wage claims since the settlement agreement also applies to previously closed cases. We encourage workers who previous cases were closed, to check with LRD, El CENTRO, the Center on Law and Poverty, or the other plaintiff organizations, if they can re-open their cases. You have the right to a free consultation from the LRD by contacting them at 121 Tijeras NE, Suite 3000, Albuquerque, NM 87102. Phone Number: (505) 841-4400.

El CENTRO invites workers with closed and unclaimed wage theft cases with the Department of Workforce Solutions to come forward: El CENTRO provides bi-weekly wage theft orientations to workers; helps workers file wage claims; works with a team of pro-bono attorneys to give legal advice when appropriate; and engages workers to seek other means of resolution through community-oriented approaches including direct-action organizing against unscrupulous employers. For more information contact Marco Nuñez at nunezabq32@gmail.com, Marian Mendez at mmendez_elcentro@yahoo.com, or call 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!

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WITH ICE

- HAVE A FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN**
If you decide that it makes sense for your family to have a plan in case of a deportation or deportation, a plan can include WHO CAN look after your child once they are taken from school, pay your bills, keep in contact with you if you are detained, provide you legal advice, pay your bills or deal with financial matters. For an example of a plan, visit our website www.elcentronm.org
- REMAIN CALM AND SILENT!**
If you are being questioned by an immigration agent, including on the street, you do not have to reveal your country of origin or immigration status. If you decide to talk, and they capture you, they can arrest you. If you are arrested, you can give your "name, your rights," and say "I do not want to answer any questions," and then "I want to talk to a lawyer."
- DON'T OPEN THE DOOR!**
In your home, you have the right not to open the door even if ICE has an arrest warrant or deportation order. To enter by force, they need a search warrant.
- DOCUMENT EVERYTHING!**
Use your mobile phone to record any interaction and document the names of the officers or the badge numbers, the color of their uniforms, the appearance of their vehicle and if the officers are working with other departments.
- NEVER SHOW FALSE DOCUMENTS!**
Do not lie, even about being a citizen. Do not show any document foreign, or a passport, consider identification or expired visa that ICE can use to identify them country of origin or citizenship.
- AT WORK**
-ICE enters your work, you have the right to remain silent, keep working, and tell them to talk to your supervisor. You do not have to disclose your country of origin or immigration status, or show any identification. You have the right to mark private and public places. ICE may enter the private areas of your workplace without a search warrant or permission from the employer or business manager.
-If you are a small business owner or a manager, during ICE inspections, ICE must give you a 72-hour notice. Do not give them permission to have access to private places. Keep your documents in a separate place to your other files, speak with a lawyer and around your employees of their right to remain silent. For a more complete list of tips about your rights and how you can protect your employees, go to <http://www.elcentronm.org>
- DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING!**
Do not sign a document if you do not understand it or if you have not talked to a lawyer about your legal options.
- ORGANIZE!**
Participate in organizations such as El Centro to defend rights and fight against deportations. Make a plan with your coworkers so they can act in solidarity to protect the rights of all.

EL CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos
 @ElCentrodIgualdadDerechos @ELCENTRO_NM
 elcentronm.org (505) 246 -1627

Luchadora del Mes: Hilaria Martínez 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 Martínez. 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.

