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Press Release

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**Immigrant Communities, Educators, Civil Liberties and
Faith-Based Organizations, Victims Advocates, and Business Leaders Rise Up at
City Council's Finance & Government Operations Committee meeting
On Immigrant Friendly Resolution**

ALBUQUERQUE- On a 4:0 bi-partisan vote (Davis, Peña, Sanchez, and Winter with Councilor Harris absent) today the Albuquerque City Council Finance and Government Operations Committee unanimously approved Resolution 18-7, strengthening Albuquerque's status as an immigrant-friendly City. Hundreds of Albuquerque residents turned out in support. The resolution was co-sponsored by Albuquerque City Councilors Klarissa Peña and Pat Davis. 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.

Amongst other provisions, the resolution will ensure that the City is not using any resources to enforce federal immigration laws, safeguard personal and identifying information, limit ICE's access to nonpublic City facilities if they don't have a judicial warrant, and ensure that the City will not enforce any federal program requiring the registration of individuals on the basis of religious affiliation or ethnic or national origin.

Although President Trump has made many promises suggesting mass deportation is on the way, resource constraints could limit some of the damage the federal government can inflict on its own. As a result, the Administration will need cooperation from local governments to help it carry out many of these threats. Resolution 18-7 will ensure that the City of Albuquerque isn't complicit in the enforcement of federal deportation programs.

After years of decline, the number of arrests made by U.S. [Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) climbed to a three-year high in fiscal 2017](#). * In Albuquerque, in the past weeks, ICE has began targeting locally-owned businesses in Albuquerque, through I-9 audits and other enforcement activity. This, combined with ICE targeting immigrant workers and parents at their homes, at court and probation, and at worksites has caused widespread uncertainty, fear, and confusion.

“As a state, I am proud to say we rejected Trump in the ballot box. In Albuquerque, we have fought back locally for over a decade against federal deportation programs that foment racial profiling, trample on our constitutional rights and led to devastating family separation.” said Marian Mendez-Cera community organizer at El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos, an immigrants’ rights and workers justice organization that has taken a lead on local immigrant-friendly policies. “By voting “YES” on R-18-7, the Council is recognizing the important contributions of immigrant community and that the City is willing to do its part to protect Albuquerque families, workers, businesses, and our economy.” Mendez Cera added, “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 they should continue to work “mano-a-mano” with the community to put community-driven solutions in place.”

"When families are broken apart, our students suffer emotionally and academically." said Ellen Bernstein, President, Albuquerque Teachers Federation. "The Albuquerque Teachers Federation stands in support of City Council Resolution 18-7 because we believe that our city needs to be a place where all of our students and their families can feel safe and secure. That is the only way students can concentrate on learning."

Immigrants play a vital role in New Mexico’s workforce and comprised 12.34 percent of the state’s workforce in 2016**. From 2006 to 2010, there were 11,440 new immigrant business owners in New Mexico, and they had a total net business income of \$389 million, which makes up 8.9% of all net business income in the state.***

Luis Angel Mendez Serrano, a father of five, and owner of Nena’s food is one of the many immigrant-owned business that spoke out at the council meeting, “As part of a network of small business owners, I can talk firsthand about the hundreds of businesses that continue to contribute and invest in the state. My employees are mothers and fathers; they are members of my community, they are honest people and extremely hardworking. Strengthening Albuquerque’s status as an immigrant-friendly city will not only help our children feel safer going to school but it is also good business and good for the economy.”

Andrea Plaza, Executive Director of Encuentro points to the economic imperative of having policies that protect immigrant workers and small-business owners, “Immigrant businesses have created jobs, generated millions of dollars in local tax revenue and revitalized many of our cities business corridors. They are essential to our public safety and their collaboration with local law enforcement supports community-policing efforts that keep our neighborhoods and business districts safe and accessible. By supporting this resolution, Councilors will join with members of Albuquerque’s business and economic development community who value hard work, family unity and justice to voice a strong commitment to protecting and keeping together vulnerable immigrant families, without whom Albuquerque would not be the vibrant, diverse and welcoming place that it is.”

Kay Bounkeau, the Executive Director of the New Mexico Asian Family Services (NMAFC), recognizes the importance of local government in the protection of immigrant families and other targeted communities in the Trump era, “as we marked the one year anniversary of the Trump Administration's Muslim Ban in January, we have seen violent acts against groups such as women, undocumented youth and families, and immigrants and refugees all under the guise of policies that will keep America safer. At NMAFC, we have heard the fear and frustration from our Pan-Asian community through accounts of harassment and discrimination, intimidation and bullying by perpetrators and within legal systems, and racism within education. Because of this, it is crucial that we

turn to our local governments to stand firmly with our families and enact policies that will keep our families safe, together, and given opportunities to thrive and succeed”.

“The encroachment of ICE into our public institutions and justice system has not improved our public safety; it has only served to sow fear and the division of families in our community.” Said Justin Remer-Thamert, Executive Director of the NM Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice. “Criminalizing the families that we worship with, work with, go to school with, families we have grown with and love is a betrayal of the belief that we are all equal to one another, neighbors and sojourners on this journey together.”

*<https://www.ice.gov/removal-statistics/2017>

** American Immigration Council, *Immigrants in New Mexico*, October 2017.

*** Robert W. Fairlie, *Open for Business: How Immigrants are Driving Small Business Creation in the United States* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2012), p. 32.

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**El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos is a grassroots, immigrants' rights and workers' justice organization based in Albuquerque, NM that works with Latino immigrant communities and allies to defend, strengthen, and advance the rights of our community.*