Albuquerque Passes Resolution 18-7 to Strengthen its Status as a Sanctuary City

On April 24th, Mayor Tim Keller officially signed resolution 18-7 to strengthen Albuquerque as an immigrant-friendly city. Mayor Keller’s administration coordinated a press conference with El CENTRO at Mayor Keller’s office for the signing ceremony. Having our members and representative from other immigrant-based organizations at the Mayor’s office sent a strong message and a marked difference from the Berry administration, that our communities belong in City Hall. We look forward to continuing to work with local elected officials and decision makers to provide better and stronger protections to our families.

Mayor Tim Keller signed the resolution days after the Albuquerque City Council approved R-18-7 on a 6:3 vote on April 16th. The resolution was co-sponsored by Albuquerque City Councilors Klarissa Peña and Pat Davis.

This resolution will ensure that the city of Albuquerque isn’t complicit in implementing Trump’s plan to target, detain, and deport Albuquerque families. It is also conducive to public safety and safeguarding civil rights and builds on Albuquerque’s legacy of passing policies that aim to integrate immigrants into the economic, cultural, and civic fiber of the city. The resolution recognizes that immigrants are our neighbors, co-workers, classmates, small-business owners down the block, tax-payers, and our family members.

Marian Méndez-Cera, El CENTRO’s workers’ justice and civil rights community organizer comments, because of the leadership and tireless organizing of our communities, New Mexico is serving as a model in the nation in the fight against Trump’s deportation machine. We recognize that R-18-7 won’t prevent all ICE activity in Albuquerque, but it is a step in the right direction.

We are grateful for the enthusiastic participation of some of our most active members who were also present at the sign-in ceremony. Mirna Lazcano attended the signing ceremony along with her youngest daughter Ashely she talked about how this resolution will directly benefit her family, “I am proud that my children are growing up in a city where the Mayor and the City Council stand with our families. This resolution will bring stronger protections for our families. As a mother, this resolution brings me hope for the future of my children.”

Hilaria Martinez spoke about the sense of victory that the resolution brings to our communities, “We are extremely proud to know that after years of fighting for our rights in Albuquerque, now we can tell our children that our communities are making history in our beloved city.”

Manuel Sanz is part of El CENTRO’s Workers Committee, and he talked about the honor of attending the ceremony along with members and allies, “I was proud that the Mayor recognized the leadership that our communities have taken in passing this resolution. I am excited to continue working with our elected officials shortly.”

Norma Dorado, a long-time active member of El CENTRO, reflects on the role this resolution will have for future collaboration between of members and elected officials, “It was my first time being at the Mayor’s office. That day, we sent the message that our communities are welcome in the offices of our elected officials. Being a sanctuary city means that our representatives work hand in hand with our communities and we are looking forward to continuing working with our Mayor and our City Council.”

Mayor Tim Keller supported our communities by signing resolution 18-7 on April 24th. This was a historic day for our working families in Albuquerque. To get involved in the fight against Trump’s anti-immigrant agenda, contact El CENTRO: 505-246-1627. We will continue to organize our communities and hold elected officials accountable for working with our communities to ensure that our voices are heard. La lucha sigue!
Hundres of members came out for our May Day community celebration, which featured live music, traditional healing services, karaoke, volleyball and soccer tournaments, dancing and children's activities. We came together to celebrate and recognize the countless contributions that immigrant communities and all workers make to the cultural, economic and social fabric of our city. We celebrated our most recent win: passing resolution 18-7 to strengthen Albuquerque's status as an immigrant-friendly city. Fabiola Bawden, an immigrant mother and an organizer with El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos reaffirmed the contributions of immigrant families, “At El CENTRO, we have new and longstanding strong leaders who are the pioneers of our local campaigns. Our members are mostly low-wage immigrant workers, many of them are students and parents, yet they take time from their busy lives to continue in la lucha. We recognize the vital role immigrants play in New Mexico's workforce. Edgar Salinas, a carpenter, father of three, and a member of El CENTRO's Workers Committee talks about his role organizing El CENTRO's Workers' Justice Month as a proud immigrant worker, “Throughout May, we highlighted the stories of our workers, we educating about wage theft, labor abuses and ways to organize to fight for labor rights, and we recruited new workers interested in fighting back! We were out at local neighborhoods, on the streets, churches and other community spaces doing outreach, speaking with people and advocating for workers' rights!”

At this event, low-wage workers and immigrant communities stood together in celebration of New Mexico's legacy of promoting immigrant and workers rights. A resilient long-time member of the Workers Committee, immigrant working grandmother, Norma Gomez, reflected about the years of resistance coming from immigrant and working families, “Today, we celebrate our local victories. We are proud of the jobs we do, and we are proud to be New Mexican.” We also uplifted the support of local immigrant business owners who contribute so much to the economic and sustainability of New Mexican neighborhoods. Many of El CENTRO's local leaders are parents, business owners and active members of their communities. Bertha Campos, owner of Mujeres en Acción, and a single mother talks about the importance of celebrating working families during May Day, “For years, community organizations, religious groups, and labor groups have gathered on this day to act and fight for our communities.

We, El CENTRO are proud of the all support provided by our own members, ally organizations, elected officials, labor unions, educators, businesses, workers, and families. Your help was essential in making this May Day Community Celebration a success.

We would like to thank the following groups for donating their services that made this day a success:

--Ballet Folklorico Desoluna
--Circulo Solar Xochipilli Danza Azteca
--Cooperativa Justa
--DJ Tequila
--El Trio Latino de ABQ
--Grupo de Danza Mayahuel Kalpulli Izcalli
--Professional Clowning Payasita Lollipop
--Radio Lobo
--Tacos Sanchez
--Tamborazo Loko

Thank you to the following organizations for co-sponsoring our events:

--Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice
--Albuquerque Teachers Federation (ATF)
--Arts Community Culture Education Sports Science (ACCESS NM)
--Encuentro NM
--Grupo de Danza Mayahuel Kalpulli Izcalli
--JUNTOS: Our Air, Our Water
--New Mexico Dream Team (NMDT)
--Organizers of the Land of Enchantment (OLE)
--Partnership for Community Action (PCA)
--South West Organizing Project (SWOP)
--Taqueria Mexico
Luchadora del Mes: Monica Ramirez, activist, immigrant mother, and a worker at Albuquerque Public Schools

This month we highlight Monica Ramirez. She is an immigrant grandmother who works preparing food for (APS). Monica became involved with El CENTRO as part of our Defensores de Familia program (Family Defenders). She was interested in using her time and energy to participate in protecting and raising the voices of our families. Monica explains her motivation in participating in our latest campaigns, particularly in our campaign for paid sick leave, "I became an active member with El CENTRO because I was passionate about fighting for the rights of our communities, especially labor rights. I volunteered because when my children were small, my job at that time did not offer paid leave. I sacrificed a day's pay many times when my children were sick, and I did not have anyone to take care of them. Now that my daughter is a mother, I use my paid sick leave to take care of my grandchild because I do not want my daughter to make the same hard choices I did."

Monica expresses her drive to continue being an activist with El CENTRO, and she encourages other members to remain active, “I will continue participating in El CENTRO’s fights for labor justice, and I encourage other members to continue working towards better protections and rights for our working families.”

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.