



714 4th St. SW ♦ Albuquerque, NM 87102 ♦ (505) 246-1627

Press Advisory

February 26, 2019

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sarai Bejarano | sbejarano@elcentronm.org | (505)-205-2512

Immigrant Communities, Victims' Advocates, Civil Liberty and Faith-based Organizations, and Economic Development Experts Celebrate the Passing of Resolution to Strengthen Bernco Status as Immigrant Friendly County

ALBUQUERQUE, NM— On Tuesday, February 26th dozens of immigrant families, advocates including civil liberty, faith-based, workers' justice, and economic development organizations spoke in support of Resolution AR 2019- sponsored by Bernalillo County Commissioner, Steven Michael Quezada which would help strengthen Bernalillo County's status as an "immigrant friendly" county. The resolution was passed by county commissioners with a bipartisan unanimous vote. The resolution passed with a unanimous bipartisan vote.

The resolution reflects a national trend to pass state and local policies in the wake of the Trump administration taking actions that aim to criminalize, persecute, detain, and deport immigrant workers and families. According to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, in addition to the hundreds of jurisdictions that already had policies limiting assistance with the enforcement of federal immigration laws, 28 states have at least one jurisdiction that enacted such policies since Trump's election.

The resolution will ensure that the County is not using any resources to aid with the enforcement of federal immigration laws, would require Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to have a judicial warrant to enter non-public areas owned or run by the County, and would safeguard personal sensitive information to ensure that data gathered by the County isn't used to target vulnerable communities.

"As a native New Mexican, I am proud of our values and our community, including immigrant communities who contribute so much to our economy and culture," said County Commissioner, Steven Michael Quezada. "No Bernalillo County resident should live in fear due to our current political atmosphere. President Trump's anti-immigrant agenda is one we will not stand for here in New Mexico. Now more than ever, we need local protections to stop family separations and to ensure that our families won't be persecuted."

A recent poll released by Latino Decisions revealed that a large majority of the New Mexico electorate believes that New Mexico's leaders should do more to protect immigrant residents from deportation and should not spend local resources aiding ICE in its deportation efforts. 70% of registered voters in New Mexico believe in the

passage of laws to safeguard New Mexican's sensitive personal information and a majority of New Mexican registered voters support policies that ensure that immigrant families in New Mexico have equal access to non-discriminatory treatment by the state's criminal justice system, including not being turned over to ICE before a trial or conviction.

"Our local government should use local resources to help build a stronger and safer community, not to separate our families," said Rosalinda Dorado from El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos whose family was directly impacted by deportation when her brother was detained after a routine traffic stop. "This resolution will help all residents of Bernalillo to feel safer when sharing their personal sensitive, including when accessing crucial services and programs."

"The political climate at the national level, and the increase in ICE activity locally, is having a chilling impact on immigrant survivors of domestic violence and other violent crimes," said Claudia Medina, Executive Director, or Enlace Comunitario. "We see that a major factor of whether or not immigrant victims of domestic violence report the abuse, or seek support services, has been assurance that our local governmental/local institutions, will not use resources to identify individual's immigration status, nor apprehend persons on the sole basis of immigration status.

A national study¹ confirms what victims' advocates are reporting locally: 78 percent of advocates reported that immigrant survivors expressed concerns about contacting police, and 43 percent of advocates worked with immigrant survivors who dropped civil or criminal cases because they were fearful to continue with their cases.

Various state and national legal service and advocacy organizations endorsed the resolution, "The NMHBA strongly believes that local government must firmly stand with the community it represents—including individuals and families that contribute to its prosperity—by enacting policies that will keep our families safe, together, and that provide each person the opportunity to thrive and succeed."-said the New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association.

"Our communities are strongest when everyone's basic rights and dignity are respected," said Peter Simonson, Executive Director of ACLU of New Mexico. "Unfortunately, Trump's deportation force seeks to fracture our communities by tearing apart families that are an integral part of the fabric of New Mexico. Bernalillo County has an opportunity and an obligation to stand up against these destructive policies and keep our families safe, intact, and thriving."

Courts across the nation have consistently sided with communities that refuse to detain immigrants, sending the clear message that policies limiting assistance with federal immigration enforcement are not only good for public safety and moral, but legal. As of of January 2019, twenty federal court decisions in the nine lawsuits over federal funding sided with cities and states against the Trump administration, ruling that adding immigration enforcement conditions to federal grants was illegal. In addition, in just the past weeks, the Los Angeles District Court ordered a nationwide injunction/stop to the federal government imposing the conditions on both current and future Byrne JAG awards and Gang Suppression Grant programs (federal law enforcement grants)

¹ released by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) and the National Network to End Domestic Violence in May of 2017

programs.

Economic development organizations point to the important role that immigrant workers, business owners, consumers, and tax-payers make to the economy, "Immigrant businesses have created jobs, generated millions in our county and are essential to our public safety,"said Agnes Noonan President of WESST. "Their collaboration with local law enforcement supports community-policing efforts that keep our neighborhoods and business districts safe."

[Click here to read the full text of the resolution.](#)

###

**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.*

Connect with El CENTRO on Twitter: [@ELCENTRO_NM](#) and on Facebook: [@ElCentrodIgualdadyDerechos](#)
