

# **SOMOS UN PUEBLO UNIDO**

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **New Report Finds Immigrants a Boon to New Mexico's Economy Local leaders respond to Immigration Policy Center report on political and economic power of immigrants in the state**

Santa Fe--Local leaders reacted to a report released yesterday by the Immigration Policy Center about the political and economic power of immigrants in New Mexico and reiterated the need for immigration reform that includes a path to legalization for undocumented immigrants. The report "New Americans in the Land of Enchantment" compiles data about the economic contributions of both documented and undocumented immigrants and concludes that during a time of economic recession, New Mexico cannot afford to alienate such a crucial part of its labor force, tax base and business community. To download the report click here.

Findings include:

- Immigrants and their children are a growing part of New Mexico's electorate. 59,482 immigrants are Naturalized Citizens. 84% of children in immigrant families are US Citizens.
- Both documented and undocumented immigrants are integral to the state's labor force. Together they comprise 11.6% of New Mexico's workforce.
- The report also concludes that if undocumented immigrants were removed from New Mexico, the state would lose \$1.8 billion in economic activity, \$809.1 million in gross state product, and approximately 12,239 jobs.

The report comes only a couple of months after the New Mexico House of Representatives unanimously passed House Memorial 60 which recognizes the economic contributions of undocumented immigrants and calls on New Mexico's Congressional delegation to pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to legalization for the undocumented.

Pointing to immigrant driver's license and college tuition legislation, State Representative Miguel García (D-Bernalillo), who sponsored House Memorial 60, said "At the state level, we've worked diligently to legislate sensibly on immigrant issues. We've chosen to integrate and engage hardworking immigrant families, rather than alienate them. Now it's time for Congress to do its part. Our elected leaders shouldn't shy away from difficult policy decisions. The need for immigration reform is urgent, and the time to act is now."

"We are pleased that the report shows with hard numbers what we've known all along," said María Cristina López, founding Board Member of Somos Un Pueblo Unido, a statewide immigrants' rights organization. "Immigrants are an integral and positive force in New Mexico culturally and economically. We contribute as workers, entrepreneurs, consumers and tax payers. It's not practical to spend billions of tax payer dollars on enforcing a broken immigration system, and it's unconscionable to continue to tear New Mexico's families apart."

Santa Fe Mayor David Coss, who sponsored a pro-immigration reform resolution at the US Conference of Mayors and recently co-sponsored a similar city council resolution, said "We all know how important immigrants are to our local and national economies, and it has been demonstrated that immigration reform can help speed up economic recovery. It's not only practical, it's the right thing to do."

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