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# Somos un Pueblo Unido Newsletter

April 2009

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WE STILL HAVE TIME TO SUPPORT THE DREAM ACT!

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We have until **April 3rd** to call and ask our legislators in Washington, D.C. to co-sponsor the DREAM Act.

Last Thursday, March 26th, the DREAM Act was re-introduced in Congress by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) as S.729, and by Representatives Howard Berman (D-CA), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) as H. R. 1751.

The federal DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act), is a bipartisan legislation that would permit undocumented students, brought to the country illegally as children, conditional legal status and eventual citizenship.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Keep calling your Senators and Representatives until April 3rd to ask them to co-sponsor the DREAM Act. New Mexico's delegation will be back in our state from April 4th thru April 19th, so you can call their local offices too.

To download their contact information and to sign the petition, go to our website: <http://www.somosunpueblounido.org/upcoming.html>

Click on the picture to listen to some of the stories young people share on how their dreams would come true if the DREAM Act is approved in Washington, D.C.

To watch Senator Durbin talk about the DREAM Act at the United States Students Association Legislative Conference on March 24, 2009 [click here](#).

**MORE:** If you want to participate in the statewide campaign to support the DREAM Act, call *Somos* at 505-424-7832; there are many ways you can help in your community.

**EMPLOYEE PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION BILL UPDATE**

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Governor Bill Richardson has signed 37 bills and vetoed 5 bills that the 2009 Legislature has sent to him. The Governor has until April 10th to act on all the bills passed by the NM Legislature. House Bill 489 -Employee Protection from Retaliation Bill- is still on the pending bill action list.

On March 19, 2009, the NM Senate approved HB 489 (Rep. Miguel García--Bernalillo) unanimously. HB 489 would prevent retaliation, extend the statute of limitation for wage claims, penalize the bad employers and require employers to post at the workplace a notice describing wage violations found and including a cease and desist order.

Please call Governor Richardson's office in support of HB 489; his office phone number is 505-476-2200.

During these past 60 days, *Somos un Pueblo Unido*, along with allies, worked hard to pass HB 489, along with HB 493 to protect all New Mexico's workers from wage theft, fine employers who fail to respond to the Wage and Hour Bureau's wage claim, require employers to maintain records of wage payment for four years, rather than the current requirement of just one year and HB 428 that would have helped prohibit racial profiling by law enforcement agencies in New Mexico. HB 493, sponsored by Rep. Al Park (D-Albuquerque) got stuck in a Senate committee.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STIMULUS PACKAGE

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New Mexico is the first of three states to place a program that will help first-time home buyers who cannot afford a down payment.

The Tax Credit Loan Program allows home buyers to take \$6,500 of the tax credit and turn it into a down payment loan that is interest-free until Jun 30, 2010.

New Mexico will receive nearly 14-million dollars to restart construction on rental properties for

very low income households and households with special needs. According to Governor Richardson's office, that means more than 25 affordable housing projects that were stopped throughout the state will restart.

To watch Governor Richardson's press conference video click on the picture above.

For more information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act go to [www.recovery.state.nm.us](http://www.recovery.state.nm.us)

For more details on the tax credit, go to [www.federalhousingtaxcredit.com](http://www.federalhousingtaxcredit.com)

**IN OTHER NEWS**

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Community Organizers Back Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Call for Immigration Reform

On March 18, President Obama met with Members of Congress from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) at the White House and immigration reform was the main topic. During his campaign, President Obama promised to tackle the issue of immigration during his first term in office and Latino and immigrant voters supported him in record numbers.

To read more about CHC visit with President Obama, go to <http://velazquez.house.gov/chc/>

Signs of Change in Immigration Enforcement Policies Emerging From DHS

According to the Migration Policy Institute, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will issue new rules governing Section 287(g) agreements between the federal government and state and local law enforcement agencies, following recent criticism of the program from the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The new guidelines, which will be issued within the next few months, are expected to direct state and local law enforcement agencies participating in the program to primarily target immigrants with criminal convictions rather than ordinary immigration-status violators.

To read more about the change in policy go to <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?id=722>

Contact Information

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phone: 505-424-7832

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