



*Somos Un Pueblo Unido*

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## **New Mexico Immigrants Prepare to March on Washington for Immigration Reform**

State delegation of 65 Latino workers and students will join tens of thousands at *March for America* to call on Congress and the President to fix broken immigration system

Santa Fe, New Mexico—On the heels of increased public pressure by national immigrants' rights groups on the President concerning immigration reform, 65 Latino students and workers from *Somos Un Pueblo Unido* will travel to Washington DC to participate in the historic *March for America*. They will join thousands of faith, labor and immigration activists from around the country to call on the President and Congress to move an immigration reform proposal forward this year.

"Congress' refusal to tackle immigration reform is taking a toll on our families and the economy. Deportations increased significantly during the first year of Obama's administration, and we are tired of seeing our families torn apart," said Rosario Dunning, *Somos Un Pueblo Unido* Board Member who will take her two children to the march. "Our elected officials promised us reform. We're going to DC to remind them that Latino voters will not tolerate broken promises."

Delegation members represent six cities in New Mexico: Santa Fe, Farmington, Española, Portales, Roswell, and Albuquerque. They'll spend four days attending strategy sessions, protests, and meetings with New Mexico's Congressional representatives. To raise funds for the trip, many sold tacos, tamales and Frito Pies to family members and friends on the weekends.

*New Mexico Conference of Churches Legislative Advocate* Reverend Dr. Holly Beaumont will join the delegation. She said "We are demanding economic fairness for everyone and citizenship rights for all who work hard to sustain our country. Our broken immigration system dishonors are nation's best ideals of inclusiveness, justice and equality. The time has come for New

Mexico's own Congressional delegation to get off the sidelines and take a strong stand for our communities on this issue."

The students and workers participating in the national event, have already been active in *Somos'* campaign to garner support for immigration reform here in New Mexico. Most participated in a recent statewide effort that prompted the New Mexico House of Representatives to unanimously pass House Memorial 60 calling on Congress to enact reform. They also worked to pass pro-reform resolutions at the New Mexico Municipal League, among other cities and counties throughout the state.

Bianca Silva, a custodian in Santa Fe and member of *Somos* said, "I know what it's like to be exploited, harassed, and retaliated against by unscrupulous employers who use immigration status as a convenient weapon against worker organizing. Immigration reform will benefit both immigrant and US born workers. Together we can work to improve wages and workplace conditions and strengthen our communities."

"Immigration reform is not only possible in 2010, it's necessary. It will help all families in this country by increasing wages, decreasing the deficit, and helping turn our economy around," added delegation member Mabel Gonzalez , Northwest Regional Director of Engaging Latinos for Higher Education (ENLACE) in Farmington. "We continue to invest in the education of our youth because we know there are great returns. Now we need to make sure that immigrant students and their families have the right to legalize their status so they can fully contribute to our local economies."

For interviews with delegation members from various New Mexico cities, please contact Marcela Díaz at 505-670-9301.

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*Somos Un Pueblo Unido* is a statewide membership based immigrants' rights organization that has worked to pass local and state policies benefiting immigrant workers and their families in New Mexico.