



Somos Un Pueblo Unido

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Press Release

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Local Community Leaders Launch Effort to Reform Immigration for America

Santa Fe, NM –Labor, faith, government, and community leaders gathered at a press conference today in front of the Lady of Guadalupe Statue to launch a public campaign to support immigration reform. In anticipation of a meeting between President Obama and key Congressional leaders next week on immigration, *Somos Un Pueblo Unido* organized the event as one of dozens across the country in a broad-based national effort to fix the broken immigration system.

“What Americans want across the country, and what we all want here in New Mexico is a workable, practical solution that brings working families out of the shadows, that’s fair to everyone, and that helps lift our economy out of this crisis,” said Santa Fe Mayor David Coss.

Chris Chávez, Executive Director of the New Mexico Federation of Labor—AFL-CIO, added, “Immigration reform is a worker’s issue. It’s the only practical way to ensure that all workers in the US can be here legally, unscrupulous employers cannot undercut honest competitors, and fairness is restored to the labor market. It will lift wages for workers, restore tax fairness, and create a level playing field for law-abiding employers.”

At the press conference, several grassroots leaders talked about pro immigration reform activities in their communities as well as the incorporation of a new text message alert system in their campaign. By texting the word “Justice” to the number 69866, immigrants and allies can receive alerts about what they can do to support immigrants’ rights. *Somos* unveiled a video PSA put together by IATSE Local 480 that will be broadcast on YouTube, local access TV stations, and *Somos* website (to see the PSA, go to <http://www.somosunpueblounido.org/CurrentVideo.php>), as well as radio spots to air across the state.

Marcela Díaz, Executive director of *Somos un Pueblo Unido*, stated, “Communities throughout New Mexico are gearing up for the campaign by door knocking, phone banking and making presentations at schools and churches to sign people up for the Immigration Reform Text Action Alert system. It’s an easy way for the grassroots to get the latest information about what’s happening in Washington and alerts about how we can help. The last time the system was activated, over 30,000 people from across the country called the White House within 48 hours. It’s another way to show our power.”

As part of the launch activities, over a dozen immigrant leaders from Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Farmington, and Roswell, will head up a delegation to the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) Summit to be held June 3-5 in Washington D.C. There, they will take part in the National Immigration Town Hall Meeting and meet with New Mexico’s Congressional Representatives to discuss why legalization for undocumented immigrants is crucial to the interests of our state.

Somos member Mabel Serrano, a student leader at the University of New Mexico who will be travelling to Washington this week, stated, “I want to tell our Congressional leaders that New Mexico’s immigrant families need some relief. We work side by side with US Citizens. We go to school together. We go to church together. We try to better our

communities together. We are a part of this country. What we need now is a legalization program so that we can also pursue our dreams without fear.”

Alan Vázquez, member of *El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos*, an Albuquerque immigrants’ rights group, said, “We *all* have a voice and a role ensuring that our New Mexico Congressman support comprehensive immigration reform. For those of us who aren’t going directly to Washington, we can join in local efforts. In Albuquerque, EL CENTRO will air PSA’s on local Spanish language radio stations and will do a live call in show on Univision’s local news station to gather messages from immigrants to take to Washington for the immigration summit and Town Hall on June 3rd.”

Deacon Anthony Trujillo spoke at the press conference about the need for reform on religious grounds. “The bible says we need to welcome the stranger. We must respect the God-given rights and dignity of everyone in our community.”

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Somos Un Pueblo Unido is a statewide membership-based immigrants’ rights organization that works to pass local and state policies benefiting workers and their families in New Mexico.