

Somos Un Pueblo Unido E-Newsletter

November 2008--Election Edition

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### **CAST YOUR VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4TH**

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Somos has been hard at work registering hundreds of first-time Latino voters and providing information about the voting process to thousands more who rarely vote in Santa Fe. Many thanks to all the volunteers who have made *Nuestro Voto 2008* a success. But we aren't done yet! We still need volunteers on Election Day. Call us ASAP to sign up!

Reports of voter intimidation in the Latino community have been making the news. Tune in to our radio show, *Nuestra América*, on Sunday at 5 PM on KSFR 101.1 FM to hear from the ACLU, ACORN and MALDEF about the impact this has on the Latino electorate and how we can protect ourselves.

If you have problems voting on Election Day or need a ride to polls, contact *Somos* at 505-424-7832.

Know your rights on Election Day

In New Mexico you have the right to:

- * Stay and vote if you were in line by 7 PM, even if the polls close after you arrived.
- * Get assistance from a friend if you need help understanding your ballot.
- * Receive a replacement ballot if you make a mistake or your ballot is defective.
- * Vote by emergency paper ballot if the machine is broken.
- * Demand to vote with a regular ballot if you're told you aren't on the list of voters. If you're still not given a regular ballot, call us at 424-7832. We will get you the information you need.

MALDEF AND ACLU SUE NEW MEXICO GOP FOR VOTER INTIMIDATION

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The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and the ACLU of New Mexico filed two separate lawsuits on October 27th against the state Republican Party for intimidating, harassing, and violating the privacy rights of newly registered Latino voters in New Mexico.

You can read the story in the ABQ Journal, New Mexico Independent and Santa Fe New Mexican. For the ACLU's press release, click here.

**IMMIGRANT VOTERS EXCEED 2004 PRESIDENTIAL VICTORY MARGIN**

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A report just released by the Immigration Policy Center (IPC) entitled "The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and their Children" examines the growing electoral clout of Latino and Asian immigrants in key battleground states. The report shows that New Americans numbered nearly 7% of New Mexico's registered voters in the last presidential election, while the margin of victory in that 2004 race amounted to only 0.6% of all registered voters. In 2006, immigrants and their children made up close to 4% of the general electorate.

The IPC predicts that aggressive GOTV efforts in ethnic communities in the last two years will likely result in Latino turnout hitting record highs in 2008-surpassing the 7.6 million Latino voters who turned out across the country in 2004.

Click here to view the report or visit www.immigrationpolicy.org

ABSENTEE VOTERS CAN VOTE EVEN IF BALLOT DOESN'T ARRIVE ON TIME

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The Election Protection Coalition, made up of several New Mexico community groups and unions, just won a ruling in court requiring County Clerks to allow voters who applied for but did not receive an absentee ballot to vote at any early vote site or the clerk's office through election day. They can also vote on November 4th at their regular polling place. These voters will have to sign an affidavit stating that they did not receive or vote with an absentee ballot.

**IN OTHER NEWS...**

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ACLU BORDER CENTER NOW HIRING

ACLU of New Mexico is looking to fill the position of Director for the Regional Center for Border Rights in Las Cruces, which manages day-to-day operations and exercises

leadership to fulfill the Center's mission of confronting civil liberties violations that stem from U.S. immigration policy in the southern border region.

For job description, visit <http://aclu-nm.org/About/opps.html>

DHS PROGRAM AIMS TO FIND UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN JAILS

The National Journal reported that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched a program on October 27th intensifying its efforts to identify and deport undocumented immigrants held in county and city jails across the country.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) estimates that local and federal jails hold between 300,000 and 450,000 undocumented immigrants and that this program could cost 3 billion dollars a year, which is more than half the total annual budget of the entire agency.

Even though ICE says its agents will only focus on finding and removing immigrants who have been convicted of violent and drug related crimes, Somos has received numerous reports from around the state that ICE detains and deports immigrants from local jails who have been arrested for misdemeanors and petty crimes, but who have not yet had the opportunity to defend themselves in court.

FINALIZED "NO MATCH" RULE COULD HURT WORKERS

On October 23rd, DHS republished its rule that would use the flawed Social Security Administration (SSA) database to force employers to fire workers if their names and Social Security numbers don't match.

The rule contains no real changes from the previous one issued in 2007, which was blocked by a federal court after several civil rights groups and unions filed a lawsuit against DHS. The lawsuit charged that the rule's enforcement would put workers at risk of losing their jobs because the SSA database is rife with errors and would cause discrimination against workers who look or sound "foreign." The court's order blocking the initial rule continues to apply to the republished rule. Therefore employers should not take adverse action against workers who have received no-match letters. Information about the lawsuit and the "No Match" rule can be found at <http://www.aclu.org/nomatch> and www.nilc.org/immsemplymnt/SSA_Related_info/