

October U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Monthly Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network
October-November 2004 Issue, Volume 3-1

No Immigrant Bashing! Support Immigrant Rights!

<http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

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August 27 New York City NoRNC Immigrant Workers Speak Out!

Immigrants Declare: No Immigrant Bashing! Support Immigrant Rights! No To The Sweatshops Exploitation And The Racism On The Community!

At the first day of the mobilization to protest the Bush Agenda during Republican National Convention in New York City, 500 people attended an Immigrant Rights Speak Out! organized by the Immigrant Solidarity Network. The program was designed to lift the voices of grassroots Immigrant organizations and workers, raising awareness of the many varied issues and struggles being led from within immigrant communities themselves.

Over 30 grassroots groups from Latino, South Asian, Muslim, Asian and African communities came together to relate news from their struggles. One of the goals of the conference was to bring the disparate focuses of many groups into a forum that would emphasize unity and promote the development of strategic action for all immigrant groups to share in the coming years.



Aug 27 Immigrant workers Speak Out! at St. Mark Church, New York City (Photo: Terry Burke)

Another goal was to build a national strategy for immigrant workers right for 2005: How immigrant organizations, students groups, community activist, human rights organizations and labor union can come to work together to fight for economic and political justice for immigrant communities.

Organizers are looking forward to moving forward in the future with the idea of a national strategy conference, a National Immigrant Workers Solidarity Summit at New York City on late Spring 2005, in which grassroots groups from all regions of the US could meet and develop a common strategy for increasing their political power and securing the goals of legalization, justice and a life free from discrimination and racism.

Key Demands for Immigrants Rights at the Aug 27 Speak Out

- Voting Rights, Driver License for Immigrants
- No to the Future Special Registration, Immigrant Detention and Deportation
- Oppose the CLEAR Act
- Support the DREAM Act

National Immigrant Workers Solidarity Summit New York City

Late Spring, 2005

For More Information, Proposals of Workshops Please

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Civil Liberties Update

From: Shoba Sivaprasad, Esq.
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ICE Says Special Registration Not Over!

Last December, DHS announced (by interim rule) that it would suspend the 30-day and annual interview requirements related to special registration (a.k.a. NSEERS). The most controversial part of this program called men from predominantly Muslim and Arab countries to immigration offices around the country for fingerprints, photographs and lengthy questioning by officers. Since the December announcement, immigration advocates, religious leaders and pro bono lawyers have worked to educate communities about the continuing requirements of NSEERS and the consequences of not registering.

Unfortunately, these efforts have been overshadowed by uninformed local DHS officials, inaccurate press accounts, and public speeches by DHS leaders, all testifying that special registration is over, or soon will be. Remarkable are the inconsistencies among DHS officials about what remains of NSEERS. Equally troubling is the absence of outreach and education by these officials to the community of the ongoing requirements of special registration, and the inability of the government to convincingly articulate how and why special registration should exist at all.

Advocates continue to engage Members of Congress and officials in DHS about continuing concerns with special registration. Last month, advocates met with ICE Head Michael Garcia and his staff to discuss enforcement issues, including special registration. ICE stated that special registration will not end in the "foreseeable" future and in fact, confirmed that ICE conducts about two in-person special registration interviews per week.

Scores of government officials, Members of Congress, and counter terrorism experts have concluded that special registration (in particular "call-in" registration) failed to make the nation safer and wasted precious government resources. Instead, thousands of registrants were deported or driven underground. Special registration undermined basic principles like equal treatment under the law.

FBI and DHS Launch "October Plan"

The "October Plan" is an initiative launched by DHS and FBI that purportedly interviews community members in order to "thwart" potential terrorist plots that would disrupt the November elections. While DHS's Immigration and Customs Enforcement has said that the initiative will not select individuals based on race or religion, there is a real fear by rights groups and communities that the interviews will target Arabs and Muslims.



National Council of La Raza Strongly Opposes Arizona's Anti-Immigrant Ballot Initiative

From: info@nclr.org
October 8, 2004

Washington, DC - Janet Murguia, Executive Director and COO of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), stated today that NCLR, the largest national Latino civil rights organization in the U.S., is strongly opposed to Arizona's Proposition 200, the so-called Protect Arizona Now (PAN) initiative, which is set to be on the Arizona ballot in November. "PAN is ill-conceived and poorly-written. It will impose great costs on the taxpayers of Arizona without accomplishing anything toward the goal of immigration reform," stated Murguia.

Murguia explained that Proposition 200 would impose new rules on voters by requiring them to prove their U.S. citizenship with specified documents, and would impose new immigration checks and reporting requirements on already overburdened state and local government employees. "The initiative is so poorly drafted that it would put police, fire, and paramedics under a legal cloud, preventing them from effectively carrying out their duties as public servants. Law enforcement, first responders, and state and local officials have carefully analyzed the initiative and have reached the conclusion that they must strongly oppose the initiative," she explained (continue Pg. 3...)

(...Prop 200, from Pg. 2)

The costs of the initiative are likely to be high for Arizona taxpayers. "The PAN initiative would cost the state of Arizona millions of dollars to implement - well over \$50 million - and Arizona could lose as much as \$100 million in federal aid. Additionally, PAN would harm Arizona's reputation and depress economic growth," continued Murguia.

"Perhaps more importantly, Proposition 200 would disenfranchise thousands of U.S.-born Americans, especially elderly Arizonans who do not have proof of their U.S. citizenship. It would also require libraries, hospitals, schools, and others to verify immigration status. I think Arizonans want the staffs of our hospitals and schools to be focused on their jobs, not on filling out needless paperwork," said Murguia.

Murguia concluded by pointing out the harm that the debate on Proposition 200 is causing Latino communities in Arizona, "Our community works hard, pays taxes, contributes to the economy, and defends this nation in our armed forces. We deserve equal treatment in law and in practice. But if Prop. 200 passes, anyone who 'looks like' or 'sounds like' an immigrant - whether they have been here five generations or five years - will be treated with suspicion every time they use any public services. There are real issues at stake in the immigration debate, but Proposition 200 deals with them badly and in a way that hurts all of Arizona; the voters should defeat it on Election Day."

For more information on Proposition 200 go to www.nclr.org/content/resources/detail/26633/.

Immigrant Rights News Stories Missed By Corporate Media

Immigration: A Taboo Issue in US Presidential Campaign

Washington, Oct 11 (Prensa Latina): The candidates for the US presidency, George W. Bush and John Kerry, have evaded the immigration topic in their electoral campaign, but continue trying to get the Latino vote for the November 2 elections, the local press informed Monday.

Immigration has become a sort of taboo issue in the candidates' campaign this year. Both President Bush and his democrat opponent Kerry have made no reference to this affair in their main advertising initiatives, some local papers agree.

However, both candidates fear losing votes of an electorate that has been attacked by anti-immigrant groups and reiterated government actions trying to identify them as potential terrorists.

The exclusion of this topic has caused concern among the Latin community in the US, where there are nearly 10 million undocumented immigrants, the source indicated, adding that community groups have criticized the absence of the topic from the debates, as well as the Republican rightwing's stance in Congress hindering and vetoing laws in favour of immigrants and their relatives.

Nearly 8 million Hispanics are expected to vote in November and the candidates should define their stances on migratory problems, analysts agree.

The following news clips are provided by Coalition for the Human Rights of Immigrants (CHRI)

COMPANY CHARGED IN "TERROR" CASE

On Sept. 30 James Eckensberger Jr., vice president of the San Antonio-based Tollin Group, entered a not guilty plea on behalf of his company to charges that Tollin--which operates in McAllen, Texas under the name Remedy Intelligent Staffing--had falsified work documents and lied to the government's Joint Terrorism Task Force during an investigation into an alleged terror plot. Remedy provided hundreds of workers to help the McAllen-based Wornick Co. fulfill a multimillion-dollar contract producing Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MREs) for the Defense Department. The

indictment says Remedy falsified work records for the employees, and when confronted about inconsistencies, covered up by producing more false documents. Ten Remedy employees arrested in the Wornick probe were convicted of using false Social Security numbers and sentenced to jail terms of up to 173 days. One was a Canadian legal resident without permission to work; the rest were Mexican undocumented immigrants. [San Antonio Express News 10/1/04; AP 9/30/04]

According to Michael Shelby, the US Attorney for the Southern District of Texas, officials uncovered the falsified work records at Remedy while investigating the possibility that Al-Qa'ida might be seeking to infiltrate Wornick for the purpose of contaminating MREs. Shelby said on Sept. 30 that information obtained in 2002 by US forces on the ground in Afghanistan had linked Al-Qa'ida to the Wornick facility. [Brownsville Herald (TX) 10/1/04]

MIGRANT VICTIM'S FAMILY GETS \$15 MILLION

On Aug. 23, a civil court jury in Laredo, Texas, awarded \$20 million in compensation to the family of Jesus Vazquez Barrera, an undocumented immigrant from the Mexican state of Guanajuato who was shot dead on June 1, 2003, on a ranch near Laredo. The ranch is owned by John R. Hurd, part owner of the San Antonio-based natural gas company Hurd Enterprises. The jury deemed Hurd responsible for 75% of the payment because he mismanaged the ranch; his ranch hand, Juan Garza Mendoza, was ordered to pay the other 25% for having shot Vazquez.

After finding malice and negligence in the shooting, the jury was to continue deliberations over additional punitive damages. However, on Aug. 24 Hurd and Mendoza agreed to pay \$15 million within seven days to settle the family's lawsuit and end the trial, avoiding a possible lengthy appeals process. "We thought we had a valid basis for appeal, but we decided to go ahead and resolve the case," said Victor Vicinaiz, a lawyer for Mendoza.

Mendoza claims he confused Vazquez for a wild hog when he shot him on Hurd's ranch near the US-Mexico border on June 1, 2003. Mendoza and other men at the ranch waited up to two hours before calling 911. Former Hurd Ranch employee Ernesto Briones testified that he had recommended Mendoza be fired for twice pursuing undocumented immigrants while armed and for being violent when drunk. Since Vazquez's death, the ranch company has not produced any written policies on firearms, safety or alcohol use. [Associated Press 8/25/04; Laredo Morning Times 8/18/04, 8/19/04; San Antonio Express-News 8/24/04; Uno Mas Uno (Mexico) 8/25/04]

About National Immigrant Solidarity Network

ISN is a coalition of community, immigrant, labor, human rights and student activist groups, founded in 2002 in response to the urgent needs for the national coalition to fight [immigrant bashing, support immigrant rights, no to the sweatshops exploitation and end to the racism on the community](#). Please visit our website:
<http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

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