

Winter 2011 U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

Winter, 2011 Issue, Volume 35

No Immigrant Bashing! Support Immigrant Rights!



<http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

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From Madison, WI to May Day 2011 Immigrants, Workers, Peace Activists UNITED!

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May Day 2011 Call To Action!

<http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org/MayDay2010/>

National Immigrant Solidarity Network

Please send your May Day 2011 action announcements to info@immigrantsolidarity.org

We are calling A national day of multi-ethnic unity with youth, labor, peace and justice communities in solidarity with immigrant workers and building new immigrant rights & civil rights movement!

Wear White T-Shirt; organize local actions to support immigrant worker rights!

1. No to anti-immigrant legislation, and the criminalization of the immigrant communities.
2. No to militarization of the border.
3. No to the immigrant detention and deportation.
4. No to the guest worker program.
5. No to employer sanction and “no match” letters.
6. Yes to a path to legalization without condition for undocumented immigrants NOW.
7. Yes to speedy family reunification.
8. Yes to civil rights and humane immigration law.
9. Yes to labor rights and living wages for all workers.
10. Yes to the education and LGBTQ immigrant legislation.

We encourages everyone to actively linking our issues with different struggles: wars in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine & Korea with sweatshops exploitation in Asia as well as in Los Angeles, New York; international arm sales and WTO, FTAA, NAFTA & CAFTA with AIDS, hunger, child labors and child soldier; as well as multinational corporations and economic exploitation with racism and poverty at home—in order we can win the struggle together at this May Day 2011!

More than 100,000 Rally in Wisconsin!

Tula Connell, Wisconsin AFL-CIO. Feb 26, 2011

On a snowy Wisconsin Saturday over 100,000 union members, working families, community members, faith leaders, activist groups and concerned citizens gathered in Madison to tell Gov. Walker to stop the attacks on the middle class and kill the bill.

Despite the weather today's rally was the biggest in the thirteen days of protests. The people of Wisconsin will continue to fight for their rights. It is time for our elected officials to show leadership, come to the table and move Wisconsin forward. (continue next page)

May Day United--Call to Action <http://www.maydayunited.org>

National Immigrant Solidarity Network Endorses and Support Different Calls for May Day 2011 and Hope By Doing So Will Brought More People from Different Movements to Join Together

This is a call to join a network of worker centers, community organizations, and labor unions to increase national participation and power on May Day 2011 to win good jobs, legalization, and equality for every worker. As we all know, Congress and state governments across the nation have begun to wage a relentless attack against all workers this year and in years to come, especially immigrant workers and workers of color. At the same time, the remarkable energy, turnout, and spirit seen five years ago on May 1, 2006 has yet to be duplicated.

Stagnant and falling wages, lingering unemployment, and escalating attacks on immigrant workers and the right of all workers to organize call for an outpouring of energy and action in the United States on May 1, 2011. A powerful grassroots movement can win fair-paying jobs and equality while defending against the expansion of Arizona-style racial-profiling laws, rampant firings, workplace raids, deportations, and the downward economic spiral confronting US working families. To that end, we invite you to support and participate in the May Day United network along the following principles of unity:

- 1) Supporting increased participation in May Day 2011 actions and supporting local groups in organizing May Day actions where they do not yet exist.
- 2) Encouraging workers to request May 1st off, or for workers interested in striking, providing organizing and legal support in advance of May Day as well as comprehensive solidarity in the event of retaliation.
- 3) Calling for- a) Jobs for all and legalization for all, b) The right to organize and true equality for every worker.

To embrace this call, please e-mail info@maydayunited.org or call Jen Waller at **510-326-3652**.

(...from last page)

Wisconsin's teachers, nurses, snow plow drivers, and other public employees have agreed to Walker's pension and health care concessions, which he said would solve the budget challenge. The Governor's continued attacks on our state's working families harm us all. It is now up to the Governor to be reasonable and listen to his constituents.

The whole nation has taken notice of what we are doing in Wisconsin. Today solidarity rallies were held in all fifty states, as America stands with Wisconsin.

What's happened in our state has made the whole labor movement stronger. None of this would have been possible without the support, dedication and solidarity of both union members and non-union members who understand more than they have in a long time just how much we're all in this together.

Madison, WI-Based Immigrant Rights Organization Voces de la Frontera Mobilizes in Wisconsin For Worker Rights

As the largest low-wage worker and immigrant rights organization in Wisconsin, Voces de la Frontera Action stands in solidarity with the workers who are currently under attack in Wisconsin. For 12 days now, we have joined a vast array of organizations and unions around the state in fighting off Governor Walker's legislative attack on fundamental labor rights.

Voces de la Frontera Action and its youth arm YES! will be mobilizing 250 members to the State Capitol rally at 3:00pm this Saturday, February 26th. We have mobilized our base around the Madison protests, sending busloads of student and community members. Our youth arm, Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES!) comprised of a diverse group of African-American, white, and Latino students have been standing in solidarity with their teachers to defend their right to collectively bargain.

Our Executive Director Christine Neumann-Ortiz spoke last Saturday, February 19th, at the largest rally to date at the State Capitol, with a message of solidarity from Latino and immigrant workers. As she stated on Saturday, "Walker's so-called budget repair bill is like the story of the Emperor who has no clothes. It has revealed for all to see, the naked truth: Wisconsin is in the frontline in a vicious class war, and we must hold the line for all our brothers and sisters in this state and in this nation."

Immigration Prosecutions Climb With Record Deportations: Study

Huffington Post February 2, 2011

WASHINGTON -- As politicians call for more immigration enforcement and border security, a report released Wednesday found that the Obama administration is already focusing its efforts on immigration at the expense of other federal law-enforcement efforts.

Despite across-the-board staffing increases in federal law enforcement, only immigration enforcement -- particularly along the United States-Mexico border -- has increased substantially over the past two years, while other federal prosecutions in most of the country fell. Prosecutions for non-immigration felonies in non-border areas shrunk by 6 percent, according to government data analyzed by the nonpartisan Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.

At the same time, the Obama administration made an unprecedented effort to curb illegal immigration, sending record levels of money and troops to the border and more than doubling petty immigration enforcement in southwestern districts.

Democrats in Congress assisted with the effort, approving hundreds of millions of dollars in border-security funding increases in hopes of winning Republican support for bills that would allow some of the 11.2 million undocumented immigrants already living in the United States to earn legal status. Substantial Republican support never materialized, however, and the legal-status legislation failed.

Meanwhile, the government deported almost 393,000 people in 2010, at a cost of about \$5 billion -- nearly 100,000 more people than the George W. Bush administration deported in 2007.

Although illegal immigration levels fell due to slackened job growth, immigration prosecutions steadily climbed in recent years after immigration reform efforts failed in Congress. Felony immigration prosecutions along the border with Mexico grew by 77 percent between 2007 -- the year Bush's efforts to pass immigration reform were defeated -- and 2010, according to TRAC data. Over the same period, non-felony immigration prosecutions along the border surged by 259 percent.

Staffing levels and changes in policy, not the actual rate of crime, tend to account for changes in prosecution rates. Within immigration enforcement, sharp increases seem to indicate both larger staffs and a heightened focus on policing illegal immigration. Although the Obama administration built up federal law-enforcement personnel across the board, increases in immigration enforcement staffing were especially high. Over a two-year period, Immigration and Customs Enforcement increased its staff by 22 percent, while Customs and Border Protection grew by 21 percent.

The current administration has repeatedly rebuffed claims that it has not seriously policed the southwestern border. In fact, federal law enforcement in the five districts along the border with Mexico makes up nearly half of all federal prosecutions, even though those districts contain less than 10 percent of the population, according to TRAC data.

"[It is] inaccurate to state, as too many have, that the border is overrun with violence and out of control," Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said on Monday in El Paso, Texas. "This statement, often made only to score political points, is just plain wrong."

The Killing of Juan Baten - Death in a New York Food Sweatshop

By DANIEL GROSS counterpunch.org
February 2, 2011

When many people think of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, it's the fashionable boutiques, music scene, and hip bars that come to mind. But for thousands of recent immigrants, the eastern section of Williamsburg is where you go to find work in food processing and distribution factories that service many of New York City's markets and restaurants. If you've ever eaten a meal in New York, you can be assured that you've consumed food that has been produced and distributed through one of these food companies and those in a few adjacent neighborhoods.

Hundreds of small and mid-sized food warehouses line an industrial corridor starting in East Williamsburg and Bushwick, and extending into the Ridgewood and Maspeth neighborhoods of Queens. Rice, seafood, hummus, soda, onions, tortillas, you name it; massive quantities of those products and everything in between is produced or packed in these factories and then delivered in bulk to restaurants and grocery stores before they end up on our plates. Though not widely-known, this in-between section of the food supply chain plays an absolutely critical role in getting us the food we all need to survive and thrive.

Despite the indispensable role they play, the workers at these food businesses, largely recent immigrants from Latin America and China, constitute an invisible workforce. Out of sight from the consuming public, employers in this industrial corridor often maintain what can be fairly characterized as sweatshop conditions. Wage theft, reckless disregard for the safety of workers, grueling shifts through the night, and abusive management are all common hardships facing workers in the sector. The work is heavy and exhausting, yet workers typically earn poverty wages and almost no one receives any health or retirement benefits.

It was in this industrial zone of food sweatshops that Juan Baten, the 22-year old father of a seven-month old daughter and a devoted husband, tragically lost his life. Mr. Baten, who lived in Brooklyn and was originally from Guatemala, worked at a tortilla factory called Tortilleria Chinantla in East Williamsburg. Last week, Mr. Baten was crushed and killed in a dough mixing machine. Mr. Baten's workplace did not have a union and had never been inspected by OSHA, the federal workplace safety authority.

While it's too early to draw definitive conclusions, troubling facts have emerged indicating that the Chinantla tortilla factory is not unlike many of the other food processing facilities in the Brooklyn-Queens industrial corridor. According to a report in *El Diario*, Mr. Baten worked incredibly long, twelve hour shifts, from six at night until six the next morning, six days a week. Regardless of what is uncovered in pending investigations, the length of those shifts alone, working through the night on dangerous equipment and with only one day off per week, should be enough to raise alarms. (The factory is currently closed by an order from the New York State Workers Compensation Board because of owner Erasmo Ponce's criminal failure to pay for workers compensation coverage, the very coverage mandated to provide some financial protection to injured workers or to families of workers, like Juan Baten's, in the event of workplace fatality.)

Many questions about Chinantla and Juan Baten's death remain unanswered. What safety procedures and training did management have in place, if any? Was the factory sufficiently staffed so workers could meet demand at a safe speed? Was the equipment properly maintained?

Still, based on what is already known, I have no doubt that Juan Baten's death could have been prevented. He should be with us today, working towards his dream of saving enough money to return to Guatemala with his wife and daughter. Instead, his family is left navigating a profoundly uncertain future with a deep wound in their hearts.

Sadly, it often takes a tragedy to open our eyes to issues normally kept safely out of sight and out of mind. Again, the conditions which likely contributed to Mr. Baten being killed are anything but uncommon. Indeed, they are typical of the food factories in the Brooklyn-Queens industrial corridor whose business models center on exploiting recent immigrant workers. The tragedy of Mr. Baten's death will only be compounded if we treat it as an isolated case rather than a wake-up call to the systemic hardships facing workers along the food chain, mostly workers of color and immigrants.

The workers who work so hard to bring us the food we depend on to survive, often in unsafe conditions and through the night, need your support. Through workplace organizing, grassroots protests, and legal actions, a campaign called Focus on the Food Chain is helping a growing number of immigrant food workers in the Brooklyn-Queens corridor win improved working conditions and increased employer compliance with the law. But these fights always trigger fierce retaliation from employers and require robust worker and community support to win. To lend a hand through solidarity actions, financial support, or to share any other ideas you might have, please connect with the Focus campaign at <http://tinyurl.com/focusonthefoodchain> or focus@brandworkers.org

Together we can honor the life of Juan Baten, avoid more senseless loss of life, and ensure that this workforce never becomes invisible again.

Daniel Gross is an attorney and executive director of Brandworkers International, a non-profit organization protecting and advancing the rights of retail and food employees. Focus on the Food Chain is a joint campaign of Brandworkers and the NYC Industrial Workers of the World labor union.

Census Estimates Show Big Gains for US Minorities

Hope Yen - The Associated Press
Thursday, February 3, 2011

WASHINGTON -- Racial and ethnic minorities accounted for roughly 85 percent of the nation's population growth over the last decade - one of the largest shares ever - with Hispanics accounting for much of the gain in many of the states picking up new House seats.

Preliminary census estimates also suggest the number of multiracial Americans jumped roughly 20 percent since 2000, to over 5 million.

The findings, based on fresh government survey data, offer a glimpse into 2010 census results that are being released on a state-by-state basis beginning this week. New Jersey, Mississippi, Virginia and Louisiana were the first to receive the census redistricting data, which will be used in the often contentious process of redrawing political districts based on population and racial makeup.

The state numbers released Thursday reflected much of the racial change as well as the lingering impact of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated coastal populations in the South. For instance:

-In Louisiana, New Orleans' population last year was 343,829 people, lower than expected as the city struggled to repopulate after Katrina more than five years ago. An interim census estimate last year had put the population at 355,000. The new count was a 30-percent decline from 2000.

-Mississippi's most populous coastal county, Harrison, saw a small decrease in population following Katrina - the first time officials recall that it didn't grow.

-The number of Hispanics in Virginia nearly doubled, representing 7.9 percent of total residents. Non-Hispanic whites represented roughly 65 percent of the state's population, down from about 70 percent in 2000. Multiracial Americans also jumped and now make up 2.3 percent of the state's population.

-In New Jersey, the number of non-Hispanic whites shrunk 6.2 percent since 2000 and now represents 59 percent of the state's population. The Hispanic share of the state's population increased from 13 percent in 2000 to 18 percent.

"There are going to be a lot of additional Hispanic officials elected when redistricting is done," said E. Mark Braden, a former chief counsel to the Republican National Committee who now advises state governments on redistricting. "But folks in power don't give up control that easily - there will be tension between the ins and outs."

Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa and Maryland are among the states scheduled to receive their data next week. By law, all states must receive their redistricting data by April 1.

Four of the eight states gaining House seats owe roughly half or more of their population gains over the last decade to Hispanics. They include Texas, which picks up four seats; Florida, which will add two seats; and Arizona and Nevada, picking up one seat apiece.

In Georgia and Washington state, which also gain one seat each, Hispanics combined with other minority groups accounted for a majority of their growth since 2000.

Among states losing House seats, Louisiana and New Jersey each would have posted a net population loss, and Michigan would have sustained bigger declines, if it hadn't been for Hispanic growth. Latinos also made up roughly 60 percent or more of the growth in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa and Massachusetts - which each lose a seat - raising questions as to whether remaining districts in those states will need to accommodate emerging Hispanic voting blocs.

Broken down by voting age, minorities accounted for roughly 70 percent of U.S. growth in the 18-and-older population since 2000, and Hispanics made up about 40 percent. Hispanics also represented more than half the growth share of the voting-age population in Texas and California.

"The growth of the Hispanic community is one of the stories that will be written from the 2010 census," Census director Robert Groves said Wednesday, previewing major demographic trends, including the movement of many minorities from city to suburb. "We should see a big difference from 2000 to 2010."

Thomas Saenz, president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, which successfully challenged the redrawing of a majority Hispanic Texas district that weakened the Latino vote after the 2000 census, said his group was expecting to see "a minimum of nine additional Latino-majority House seats" based on 2010 results, if states comply with federal law.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act protects the interests of substantial minority voting blocs, in some cases requiring states to get federal approval of state redistricting plans. The law does not ensure that minorities are elected to office, but that votes of minorities are not overly weakened in a way that keeps them from electing the candidates they prefer. Based on population growth, MALDEF has suggested that several new Hispanic districts are warranted in places such as Texas, Florida,

California and New York.

"We'll be monitoring everywhere," Saenz said.

Jeffrey M. Wice, a Democratic redistricting attorney, said states also will have to decide whether to consider citizenship when drawing political lines. Many lower federal courts have ruled that citizenship data should be used if available to determine whether a minority voting bloc has been unduly weakened - an issue that could mix already intense redistricting fights with contentious immigration politics.

Some demographers say the available census data on citizenship rates may not be reliable in certain situations because the numbers are five-year averages from 2005-09.

"This is a new area, and the Supreme Court has largely been silent on the issue," Wice said. "In some places, the use of citizenship data may dilute the ability of Hispanic communities to be fairly redistricted. Republicans may attempt to base redistricting on citizenship data in New Jersey, so that is one state to keep an eye on."

The preliminary demographic numbers are based on the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey as of March 2010, as well as comparisons of the 2000 census with 2009 demographic estimates and the 2009 American Community Survey, which samples 3 million U.S. households. According to those figures, minorities represented between 81 percent and 89 percent of the U.S. population growth since 2000, higher than the official 80 percent share in 2000.

The minority growth share in 2010 is the largest in recent memory, with only the influx of European minority immigrants such as Italians, Poles and Jews in the late 1800s possibly rivaling it in scope, said William H. Frey, a demographer at Brookings Institution who analyzed the census data.

Other findings:

-In all, non-Hispanic whites make up roughly 65 percent of the U.S. population, down from 69 percent in 2000. Hispanics had a 16 percent share, compared with 13 percent a decade ago. Blacks represent about 12 percent and Asians roughly 5 percent. Multiracial Americans and other groups made up the remaining 2 percent.

-California, Texas, New York and Hawaii were among the states with the largest number of people who identified themselves as multiracial.

-Some 40 states show population losses of white children since 2000 due to declining birth rates. Minorities represented all of the increases in the under-18 population in Texas and Florida, and most of the gains in the child population in Nevada and Arizona.

"The new engines of growth in America's population are Hispanics, Asians and other minorities," Frey said. "But it's just the tip of the iceberg. For the under-18 population - potential voters in the not-too-distant future - minorities accounted for virtually all the growth in most U.S. states."

"Political strategists and advocates, especially in growing states, cannot afford to ignore this surging political wave," he said.

In December, the Census Bureau officially reported the nation's population was 308,745,538, up from 281.4 million a decade ago. The growth rate for the past decade was 9.7 percent, the lowest since the Great Depression, with most of the growth occurring in the South and West.

The population changes will result in a shift of House seats taking effect in 2013.

Associated Press writer Suzanne Gamboa contributed to this report.

Online

Census Bureau:www.census.gov

Frey's review of 2010 census:www.CensusScope.org/2010Census

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2/21: Activists reject Illinois anti-immigrant bill

Chicago, Feb 21 (EFE).- A group of activists criticized Monday the "hatred against immigrants" embodied in a bill presented in the Illinois General Assembly modeled on Arizona's controversial state law SB1070.

Randy Ramey Jr., a Republican who represents West Chicago, presented HB1969, the "Taxpayers Protection Act," which authorizes local police forces to detain anyone they suspect of being an undocumented foreigner.

The measure would ban any limits on local police work in enforcing federal immigration laws.

HB1969 would impose penalties on foreigners not carrying a residence permit at all times, and for employers who "intentionally" hire illegal aliens.

The bill also imposes severe penalties on people who transport, hide or protect undocumented immigrants.

While Ramey says he wants to protect taxpayers, his initiative only "continues to enflame hatred against immigrants instead of proposing real solutions to fix our immigration system," the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights said in a statement.

It added that Ramey's bill is a near copy of SB1070, "which sparked a wave of anti-immigrant hatred surging across the U.S., destroying hundreds of thousands of families and allowing local 'cowboy cops' to hunt whoever they think looks like an immigrant."

Census data indicates that in Illinois there are at least 250,000 undocumented immigrants, mostly of Mexican origin.

A survey published by the Chicago Tribune indicated that 87 percent of people who live in the metropolitan area support the passing of immigration reform that regularizes the status of undocumented aliens.

The Illinois lower house, where HB1969 was presented, also condemned the Arizona law last year in a bipartisan vote.

That vote shows Ramey "doesn't even represent the views of many Republicans," according to ICIRR, which calls the lawmaker an "anti-immigrant extremist."

The coalition cites a study by the University of Illinois at Chicago estimating that undocumented immigrants in the Chicago area generate \$5.45 billion a year in economic activity, spurring the creation of 31,000 jobs.

"All of this would be lost if HB 1969 passes - just as Arizona's economy further tanked after it enacted SB 1070," the ICIRR said.

Pro-immigrant activists will stage a political rally March 3 in Springfield, Illinois' capital, to pressure state lawmakers to block the bill.

Please Download Your Activism Videos at ActivistVideo.org

ActivistVideo.org is the video activism service created by National Immigrant Solidarity Network and Action LA, the first professional video sharing site for activist community!

2011 Activist Calendar for Mobilizations (Compiled by United for Peace & Justice)

- **3/20 Day of Nationally Coordinated Local Actions, including Vets action and local educational forum in Washington DC, March 21-22 Lobby Days.**
- **3/20 Multi-Movement Dialogue, Washington DC**
- 3/26 Global actions against Finance
- 4/3-6 Alliance for Nuclear Accountability DC Days
- 4/4-7 School of America's Watch – DC Days of Action – Resist Militarization of the Americas
- **4/8 -15 Week of Action to Defund War**

- 4/8 NCCR – Pentagon
- 4/9 UNAC in NY
- 4/12 Global Day of Action to Cut Military Spending
- 4/15 Tax Day
- 4/15-18 Power shift Action
- 4/20 Action for Climate Justice, WDC
- 5/1 May Day 2011 - March in solidarity with Immigrant Communities, everywhere
- **5/15-20, Mobilization for Economic Justice New York and...**
- 6/ 7-14, March to Blair Mountain
- 6/26-27 President Obama attends the G-8 summit. Deauville, France
- **8/1-30 Nuclear Free Future Month, Hiroshima/Nagasaki Events**
- **10/7-10 Fall Mobilization - Afghan War Anniversary**
- 10/12 Global Day of Action for Mother Earth
- 11/11 Veterans Day Actions
- 11/19 SOA Watch Mobilization at Ft. Benning, GA

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All Donations Are Tax Deductible!

Make check payable to NISN/AFGJ and it will be tax deductible! Send your check to:
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or visit: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/nyc-immigrantalert>

US-Mexico Border Information and Action Alert!

send e-mail to: Border01-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
or visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Border01/>

Virginia state-wide immigrant organizing E-mail list

send- e-mail to: va-immigrantrights-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/va-immigrantrights>

May Day 2008 national organizing e-mail list

send e-mail to: mayday2008-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/MayDay2008>

About National Immigrant Solidarity Network

NISN 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>

Contact Information:

E-mail: info@ImmigrantSolidarity.org
(213) 403-0131 (Los Angeles)
(212) 330-8172 (New York)
(202) 595-8990 (Washington D.C.)
(773)942-2268 (Chicago)

Please donate to NISN! (All donations are tax deductible!)
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