



Coalición de Derechos Humanos

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For Immediate Release

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Protest Napolitano's Attack on Arizona Workers

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

4:00- 5:00 PM

Plaza of the State Building

400 W Congress St (Congress and Granada)

GOVERNOR NAPOLITANO BOWS TO ANTI-IMMIGRANT FORCES, SIGNALLING ARIZONA'S WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE THE HEALTH OF COMMUNITIES

TUCSON - Beginning in January, 2008, the State of Arizona will enforce the toughest employer sanctions in the country, according to Governor Janet Napolitano. HB 2779 will punish Arizona businesses with a suspension or revocation of their business license, requiring Arizona employers to use the federal government's Basic Pilot Program (BPP) to verify employment authorization. In an accompanying letter issued on the same day to U.S. Representative Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Senator Harry Reid, Governor Napolitano announced her action and blamed the Congress' failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

"While her observation of the federal government's failures on this issue is correct, this bill is certainly neither a meaningful nor positive step towards any solution, but rather represents a blow to working families," states Anna O'Leary of Derechos Humanos. "It is shameful that Governor Napolitano would follow the politically expedient path to the criminalization of our most basic needs: the right to work and the right to hire."

Immigrants have contributed greatly to Arizona's communities and economy, as has been well-documented by academics, economists and businesses alike. HB 2779 will create a hostile environment for both employers and workers alike, resulting in an economic downturn for business and trade.

Governor Napolitano's signature, allowing for the expenditure of millions of dollars to create and expand bureaucracies to investigate, prosecute and penalize employers and workers is incomprehensible, particularly as Napolitano herself has noted that the BPP currently accommodates fewer than 15,000 businesses nationwide, while Arizona alone has 130,000-150,000 businesses. According to the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the BPP has a high error rate, particularly with Hispanic surnames. As the fear of persecution will push more immigrant workers into the shadows, HB 2779 will lead to wholesale abuse, racial profiling, and hostility in Arizona workplaces, ultimately affecting entire Arizona communities.

"Rather than demanding that Congress act to alleviate migration by engaging in fair economic trade and the enactment of realistic immigration laws, these measures rob taxpayers of funding that should be going to basic needs in Arizona communities, such as health care and education." says O'Leary. "While employers and our economy will feel the impact, it is the undocumented worker population that will again be sacrificed in the name of enforcement. The truth is that all of us will suffer."

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