

United for Immigration Reform in 2010

Unity May 1 march calls for comprehensive immigration reform in 2010 for workers, youth and families

Los Angeles, CA – Los Angeles most prominent immigration advocacy, human rights, labor, and religious organizations gathered at the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor building on Wednesday, April 7, 2010 to announce we are combining our efforts to organize one united and massive march and rally for comprehensive immigration reform called United for Immigration Reform in 2010. We are calling on all Angelenos to demand comprehensive immigration reform for workers, families and youth by marching in Downtown Los Angeles on May 1.

Maria Elena Durazo, Secretary-Treasurer, L.A County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO stood with four Los Angeles immigrant workers from around the world: Odunola Famutimi, an in-home care worker from Nigeria, Hripsime Tamazyan, an in-home care worker from Armenia, Benjamin Cuizon, a hotel cleaner from the Phillipines, and Tomas Rodriguez, a carwash worker from Mexico. Collectively, they have lived and worked in the U.S. for more than 50 years. They spoke about the urgent need for comprehensive immigration reform for themselves, their families, and their coworkers.

Tomas Rodriguez is an immigrant carwash worker who has been working in the U.S. for more than 13 years. He said, “Immigration reform is important so that we will stop being exploited as workers – paying us less than minimum wage and humiliating us. It is also important so that we can see our families, our parents, but still have the opportunity to keep working in this country – because that’s why we’re here – to work.”

Julio Marroquin, a representative from the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA), agreed that “LIUNA believes broken immigration policies have created a system in which millions of workers live without basic job protections and are often exploited by unscrupulous employers. This system abuses both immigrants and US workers by driving down wages and stepping on workers’ rights.”

Juan Jose Gutierrez, the President of Vamos Unidos U.S.A., urged President Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform in 2010 by stating, “The time is not five years from now. It is now.”

Religious leaders were also present. Evangelical Reverend James Tolle from The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, CA provided the invocation and called comprehensive immigration reform a “moral” issue. Father Richard Estrada, of Our Lady of Angels “La Placita” Church, asked everyone to join hands in a final prayer. He referred to the fight for immigration reform as “spiritual.”

Angelica Salas, the Executive Director for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Aquilina Soriano, the Executive Director for the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC), Olivia Park from National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC) also spoke at the press conference.

We expect tens of thousands to march with us on May 1. The United for Immigration Reform in 2010 March will be on May 1, 2010. It will start at 10:00 a.m. at Pico and Broadway and finish at Temple and Broadway.

Organizations present at today's announcement included: Coalition for Humane Immigrants Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional, Korean Resource Center (KRC), Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, Peace and Justice Committee of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (PJCALA), Pilipino Worker Center (PWC), Reform Immigration FOR America (RIFA), Service Employees International Union-United Long Term Care Workers (SEIU-ULTCW), Union de Guatemaltecos Emigrantes, Vamos Unidos U.S.A.