

Statement of Unity on May 1st
Immigrant Communities in Action

April 27, 2010
New York City

***“A Call to Immigrant Organizations & Workers Centers:
Arizona’s Law Should NOT Be a Call for
Schumer’s Comprehensive Immigration Reform Blueprint”***

“We believe our blueprint is even stronger than the Arizona senators’ proposal in stopping the flow of illegal immigrants because our plan both increases border security and prevents employers from hiring illegal immigrants”

- Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY)

<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/93077-schumer-slams-mccains-immigration-plan>

Last week as Arizona became the focal point of the immigrant rights struggle, Senator Schumer clearly articulated the heart of his “blueprint” for Comprehensive Immigration Reform- more of the very same dangerous, anti-immigrant, criminalization passed as SB1070 in Arizona.

Across the nation, the last month has turned into of the most historic moments for the immigrant rights movement in the U.S. As the worst anti-immigrant law was signed in Arizona, millions across the country are gearing up to pour out into the streets again on May 1st for real immigration reform.

This statement is being written as a message to immigrant organizations like ours who continue to struggle for real reform and must always remain accountable to our bases- the very people whose lives are at stake everyday in our jobs, in our neighborhoods, at the borders, and at every interaction with law enforcement. Our communities cannot afford to settle for just any reform or bill simply because it is more politically ‘feasible’. Our lives cannot be compromised for political expediency.

Our call as immigrant workers, families, and youth is for a reform rooted in our dignity and human rights. We state clearly as low-wage, migrant worker-led organizations across the city and country that our call is NOT for Schumer's blueprint of immigration reform. Our message comes after direct consultations with thousands of our members who are undocumented low-wage workers and youth from diverse national and ethnic origins.

The unfortunate call for a second May 1st mobilization at Foley Square has divided our movement and marginalized our right of immigrant communities to self-determine what our vision for justice truly is. New York City needs a unified call with the right of all immigrant workers to determine their position on Schumer's blueprint and the issues affecting our lives. There is a real and legitimate outcry from the bases of immigrant people to not use May 1st and the indignation at Arizona's new law to advocate for any bill from Senators Schumer and Graham when they have clearly demonstrated their intent to permanently criminalize immigrants and expand Arizona-type law nationally.

Contrary to what many of our allies are saying, we do not need to nor want to see Schumer's full bill based on the obviously dangerous "Four Pillars" blueprint we have already glimpsed. We are not so naive as to think that Schumer's bill will be a turn-around from his blueprint. We are not so shortsighted as to trade off decades of criminalization of millions of immigrants, in order to pass any immigration reform bill right now. It will not be a blessing to see the full bill or have it introduced in Congress, it will be a curse akin to Sensenbrenner in 2005.

Arizona's racist SB1070 has shown us that we as an immigrant rights movement are at a critical juncture in history. The decisions we make as leadership of communities and organizations must answer directly to the very people we claim to struggle for. And yet, with the stakes as high as they are in this moment, the masses of immigrant people have not been told the truth about Schumer's plans in order to meet the political expediency of Washington D.C., belt-way strategy. This lack of genuine and deep political discussion is damaging to our unity

as a movement, and in turn damaging to our communities. As organizations of immigrants and workers, our unity is essential to any reform, be it labor or immigration, in an Obama administration and in future administrations. May 1st, International Workers Day, is an opportunity for education and expansion within our communities, and solidarity and unity in our movement.

Proposals such as Schumer and Graham's are tacit agreements to the xenophobic and racist sentiments that have led to hundreds of hate crimes against migrants and the passing of Arizona's SB1070. We do not accept the pillars put forth by Senator Schumer. We call upon all immigrant rights organizations to denounce the proposal laid out by Schumer and Graham, and to continue the struggle for a comprehensive and humane immigration reform based on dignity and human rights.

Our lives and future are not a political game. Our children's future are not a bargaining chip to gain political power at this moment. Victory for our communities is not in passing legislation that panders to the right where our own 'leaders' call for 'militarized borders', 'tougher enforcement', and 'criminalizing immigrants.' This is not the way to 'win' perhaps one of the most inspiring social justice movements of our time led by millions of the most disenfranchised people in this country.

Join us for May 1 at Union Square
in commemoration of International Workers Day and for full rights for
immigrants.

Immigrant Communities in Action
was founded in 2005 to allow true bottom-up, grassroots decision making
by low-wage, immigrant people and to organize for real and just
immigration reform in New York City and nationally.
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ICA is:
VAMOS Unidos – Street Vendors Mobilizing and Organizing in Solidarity
Damayan Migrant Workers Association
DRUM – Desis Rising Up and Moving
Centro Hispano 'Cuzcatlan'