

• IMMIGRANT LAW PROTEST

Congressman Pearce responds

DENISE MARQUEZ NEWS-SUN**Pearce**

After around 100 Hobbs residents held a protest Tuesday against Congressman Steve Pearce, R-N.M., for voting in favor of two proposals involving immigrant laws, Pearce said he stands with his vote.

Pearce voted to pass H.R. 3003, the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act, and H.R. 3004, Kate's Law, on June 29, which both bills were passed by the House of Representatives. He was the only New Mexican representative who voted for the two bills. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., and Michelle Lujan Grisham, D-N.M., both voted against the two bills in June.

H.R. 3003 may prevent sanctuary cities from existing by withholding certain federal grants from cities that refuse to comply with the nation's immigration laws. H.R. 3004 will increase penalties for individuals who come back to the U.S. after being convicted of a felony and deported. The bill was created after Katie Steinle was murdered on July 1, 2015 on a San Francisco pier by an individual who had seven prior felony convictions and was deported on five separate occasions.

"As New Mexicans, we know firsthand the faults in our out of date and antiquated immigration system," Pearce wrote in an email response. "Since arriving in congress, I have supported and fought for a complete overhaul our immigration laws with policies that provide just and fair answers for all. However, failures and flaws within the immigration system does not mean we should ignore the law, it means we should work together to reform it."

The protest was organized by Somos Lea County, the local chapter of Somos Un Pueblo Unido, a statewide immigrant right's activist group. The group marched down Turner Street from the JCPenney store to the Hobbs Republican Party Headquarters, 1776 N. Turner.

Marina Piña, a community organizer for Somos Un Pueblo Unido Lea County, told the News-Sun some of Hobbs' community feels the two bills are anti-immigrant laws and want Pearce to know he does not have their support.

"When the members were organizing this protest they said, "People need to know that Congressman Pearce did not support his own community on this and

we need to express what we have to say, because we don't think it's right.' Congressman Pearce continues to have this very-anti-immigrant rhetoric when it comes to voting. You (Pearce) may not vote with us but here we are. We're watching and we want to keep you accountable to your vote."

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