



For Immediate Release

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Full recording can be viewed [\[here\]](#).

Democracy Cannot Be Saved Without Immigrants: A Call for Unity and Action

SANTA FE, NM — Today, on Citizenship and Constitution Day, officials and community leaders gathered in Santa Fe to affirm that protecting immigrants' rights is essential to protecting American Democracy. Speakers warned that fear-based policies are undermining the nation's democratic foundation, and urged unity and action to safeguard inclusion, civic participation, and constitutional rights.

"Immigrants are not only defending their own rights, they are safeguarding democracy for everyone," **said Zulema Chavero, Somos Un Pueblo Unido**. "Attempts to intimidate, price out, or exclude our neighbors directly attack the values enshrined in our Constitution."

Recent federal measures make the path to citizenship and civic participation more difficult:

- Skyrocketing immigration fees that block working families from applying.
- The militarization of the USCIS included a rule allowing officers to carry firearms and make arrests.
- Detention of applicants at citizenship interviews is designed to intimidate and deter participation.

"Immigrant families and individuals who are seeking to become citizens are not only the heart and soul of our democracy, they also fulfill the promise of America. Anything that discourages them harms all of us. On this Citizenship and Constitution Day, Santa Fe reaffirms our commitment as a welcoming city where immigrant rights and opportunities are respected and protected," **said Mayor Alan Webber**.

As part of that commitment, Santa Fe renewed its partnership with Welcoming America, a national initiative that helps communities ensure all residents can fully participate in civic life. The city also supports programs like Citizenship Now! that expand access to naturalization.

“Immigrants are our neighbors, friends, and family,” **said Commissioner Lisa Cacari.** “Expanding pathways to citizenship is a matter of justice and inclusion that strengthens democracy and promotes prosperity for everyone.”

“Our commitment is to support newly naturalized citizens as they engage in the democratic process,” **added Rosangela Ortiz, Chief Deputy Bureau of Elections at the County Clerk.** “Every vote matters, and every new voter strengthens the promise of equal representation.”

Speakers encouraged eligible residents to seek support through trusted legal service providers and community-based organizations like Somos Un Pueblo Unido, which runs the Ciudadanía ¡Ya! program. The initiative offers guidance, education, and encouragement to help New Mexicans overcome barriers to citizenship.

“Naturalization is more than paperwork,” **said Enrique Zambrano, Somos member.** “It’s a declaration that we belong here, and when we gain a voice and a vote, we gain the power to shape our future.”

Leaders also warned that family literacy, education, and citizenship preparation programs remain under attack, with funding threats creating uncertainty for immigrant families. While an injunction protects access, advocates stressed the importance of defending these resources.

Community leaders urged every eligible resident to participate in civic life because unity and participation are the strongest tools for defending democracy.

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[About Somos Un Pueblo Unido](#)

Somos Un Pueblo Unido is a statewide immigrant-based civil and workers' rights organization with membership teams in eight counties and worker centers in Santa Fe, Hobbs, Roswell, and Farmington.