



## COLORADO LATINO LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH ORGANIZATION STATEMENT ON THE PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS ON IMMIGRATION

February 20, 2017

**Latinos belong in Colorado.** Latino families have centuries-old roots here and in other southwestern states. Spanish was spoken here long before the arrival of English-speaking settlers. One out of five Coloradans are Latino. We are proud of our heritage and we are here to stay. Like the great majority of Americans, most Latinos in Colorado today are either immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Most Colorado Latinos are of Mexican descent.<sup>1</sup> Mexican immigrants play a vital and constructive role in the Colorado economy. Mexican citizens and their U.S. descendants have been an important supply of flexible labor for the U.S. since 1848. Ever since the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1976, U.S. immigration laws and enforcement have been unfairly stacked against migrants from the western hemisphere, especially México.<sup>2</sup>

**Responding to the current political climate.** Oftentimes when faced with an excess of information it's difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. So, be mindful of your sources, ask hard questions, and don't be afraid to seek out input from trusted community resources. This is a time for increased public discourse and civic engagement. And while we fully acknowledge the community's concerns, we shouldn't allow ourselves to be paralyzed by fear. Now is the time to become engaged and take the necessary steps to be an advocate for your community.

**If the immigration status of friends or family members is in doubt, consult a qualified attorney now.** Ask the American Immigration Lawyers Association at <http://www.aialawyer.com/> to help you find a qualified immigration attorney. Do not rely on "notarios" for immigration help or advice. Do not answer any questions by ICE agents or sign any documents without first consulting a qualified attorney. Do not allow immigration agents into your home unless they have a court order signed by a judge.

**How CLLARO has responded.** CLLARO is a community-based nonprofit organization. For over half a century, CLLARO has trained and supported Latino community leaders, advocated for equal opportunity and justice for all, and researched issues affecting Latinos throughout Colorado.

In response to the new administration's executive orders regarding immigration and refugee policies, CLLARO has created an open-source "**Know Your Rights**" toolkit. This public folder includes original research from CLLARO's policy committee on various executive orders and other concerns (specifically the I-407 form), along with resources from community and national partners and, finally, our "**How to be an Ally**" presentation which can easily be downloaded and modified for use by individuals and organizations who want to share this information with their communities. CLLARO's "**Know Your Rights**" toolkit can be found by accessing the following public link: <http://bit.ly/2INgsUs>.

A review of economic research by the Urban Institute shows that economists have found that **immigrants are good for Colorado, and good for our nation.**<sup>3</sup> The Latino immigrant workforce is a large, productive, and economically vital part of the Colorado economy. Research also shows that immigration accelerates national economic growth, which helps increase and improve employment opportunities for all U.S. citizens.

**CLLARO urges Coloradans to support:**

- Respect for everyone's civil and human rights, including the Constitutionally-guaranteed rights of citizens of other countries,
- Fair treatment for Latinos and their families,
- Compassionate and respectful treatment of all refugees and immigrants,
- A reasonable path to U.S. citizenship for immigrants of all nationalities,
- Improved access for undocumented drivers to apply for Colorado driver's licenses, as allowed by current law,
- Equitable education and opportunities for apprenticeships, workforce development, job training, and placement assistance for **all Coloradans**, so that Coloradans of all ages can succeed in our changing economy,
- Equal opportunity for all Coloradans.

**CLLARO opposes wasteful, unjust, and inhumane persecution of all vulnerable minorities, including, but not limited to:**

- Insulting and hateful political rhetoric,
- Disruption of families and separation of parents from children and loved ones due to detention by ICE of suspected civil immigration status violators,
- ICE enforcement actions in traditionally safe community institutions like schools, churches, and local courts.
- Costly confinement of those detained immigrants and refugees who are obviously willing to appear for immigration court hearings when so ordered,
- Calls for local police, sheriffs, and school districts to violate immigrant community trust and divert scarce local resources to immigration enforcement activities.

The Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) is the nation's largest law enforcement agency and has a multi-billion-dollar budget. Without a court order, ICE has no right to demand data, detention services, or other services from Colorado local government.

**Over eighty percent of Latinos in Colorado are U.S. citizens. CLLARO calls upon all Latino U.S. citizens to register to vote, and to vote for candidates who will work for Colorado's Latino communities.**

CLLARO calls upon all Coloradans to respect each other throughout the state, including hard-working immigrants. We ask everyone to support all vulnerable immigrants and refugees living in fear of harassment, detention, deportation, and separation from children, loved-ones, and their communities. Immigrants have long contributed to our society and our economic prosperity as a country. They deserve a chance to come out of the shadows and not have to live in fear for the future of their families.

**Please join CLLARO in supporting immigration reform and a reasonable path to citizenship.**

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