



Governor Murphy on Driver's Licenses for All

Since his inauguration earlier this year, Governor Murphy has made major strides towards making New Jersey a fair state for all its residents. So far, the Governor has sought to narrow the gender pay gap, tighten climate control regulations, and extend a hand to the state's immigrant population.

On this last goal, the Governor has held true to his campaign promises. Last month, he signed legislation that extended state financial aid to the undocumented state- resident students to allow for a level playing field and greater economic contribution to the state, but it appears that he is not done with adding to this progressive playbook. In fact, he has stated that he supports the current legislative push to expand the driver's license privilege.

Earlier this month he added, "I don't have a handle on timing and we don't talk about specific bills until they get here, but conceptually, this is something that you should assume we're all in on." Although this remains a rather contentious issue, the measure will provide major benefits both to the state's economy and public safety.



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Governor Murphy Signs the Tuition Equality Act

For the past few months, we have been chronicling the progress of bills A-3467 and S-699 through the chambers of the State's legislature, but we can finally on the 9th of May the State of New Jersey became the 10th state in the nation to extend state financial aid to undocumented students.

While many have been highly critical of this measure, we, as well as other organizations throughout the state, welcome this measure as this allows the thousands of undocumented or partially documented youth in the state to not only achieve their education goals but to aid in acquiring the skills necessary to positively contribute New Jersey's economy.

While this is a major victory for advocacy groups like WOTS, who have spent over a decade on this issue, there is much work left to be done before the system is fully operational.

Perhaps one of the biggest issues that lie ahead is creating the proper channels of information between

New Jersey's Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESSA), which administers the state's financial aid programs and the state's various higher education institutions.

In fact, there have already been discrepancies as certain institutions are under the impression that they are to honor the legislation come the 2019-2020 academic year. This is in direct conflict with the legislation, as it is made effective as early as this upcoming 2018-2019 academic year.

Additionally, there are the issues of raising awareness to those directly affected by this measure. This includes making prospective students and their families aware of the new possibilities made available to them under this new legislation and to educators and staff in high schools throughout the state.



Customs and Border Patrol Under Fire After Death of 19-Year-old in Texas

"Don't treat us like animals," there are the words of Dominga Vicente, the aunt of 19-year-old Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez, who was fatally shot after her arrival into Texas late last month.

Ms. Gomez Gonzalez, a native of San Juan Ostuncalo, Guatemala, took her three-week journey to the US to seek greater economic opportunity and to reunite with her longtime boyfriend. But her journey was tragically cut short as she was shot dead after an encounter with Customs and Border Protection (CBP) near Laredo, Texas.

While the exact nature of the remains unclear, it appears that CBP had responded to a report of illegal activity. It has been reported that the office had opened fire at a group that rushed at him with a blunt object, but since the initial report, the details have changed. Since then, the officer involved has been placed on administrative leave and both the FBI and the Texas Rangers are investigating the incident.

Currently, Guatemalan authorities are working on repatriating Ms. Gomez Gonzalez body. It should be noted that this is not an isolated case as there have been 256 incidents that have involved at least one use of force by CBP personnel since October 2017 to March 2018.

Read More:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/26/us/border-patrol-shooting-woman.html>



Early last month, the Secretary of the Department Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen formally announced the termination of Temporary Protected Status for Honduran nationals. This decision was based in part on a DHS report that claims that Honduras has made substantial recovery after the widespread destruction that the nation suffered by Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

Honduras and nine other nations, including El Salvador, Haiti, and Nicaragua are part of this program which, serves as a form of humanitarian relief to nations that have been plunged into instability by war, natural disasters, or any other crisis that prevents nationals from returning home. Since its creation in 1990, TPS gives its recipients a permit to work in the US and a lower priority for deportation. Besides this, the program does not offer any other benefits as TPS recipients have a rather limited pathway to adjust their legal status as the program was never intended to provide citizenship, outside of family

TPS Recipients Rally for a Push Towards Residency

Although the DHS is gutting the program, TPS recipients continue to fight for residency

While Honduras has made significant progress towards full recovery, the nation is still quite far from the stability necessary to absorb the 57,000 Hondurans living in the US under TPS.

In fact, Honduras suffers from endemic levels of violence as seen by its homicide rate of 42.8 per 100,000 citizens. In addition, the nation is experiencing major political upheaval due to a 2009 coup d'état which over the years has brought a president that has dramatically expanded the power of the presidency and curbed social liberties. Such as the violent repression of social mobilization and peaceful protests.

"if they want to separate us they will not"

Considering the uncertainty looming over TPS recipients, over 60 people came together on May 5th rallied together on the Morristown in solidarity. The participants which were mainly made up TPS recipients and their families marched from the Morristown Green

to Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen's office in the heart of Morristown's court complex.

Speaking on the situation in Honduras and the prospect of being separated from her family in the US, Pastora Vasquez a local community member and TPS recipient noted "it pains me to talk about the situation in Honduras, that is where I am from... the politics there are beneath us, if they want to separate us they will not, my daughter will remain here, she is a US citizen".

Although the situations of TPS recipients has been at a relative impasse, that has not stopped community members and other advocacy groups from seeking a fair solution to the plight of TPS recipients. Apart from organizing solidarity events such as this past month's march, WOTS is working on organizing directly impacted individuals on bills of support that grant a pathway to adjust permanent residency to the hundreds of thousands of TPS recipients in the nation.



Congratulations to OSHA 30 Graduates

Although most of the work we highlight comes from our advocacy and organizing team, that's is not all we do here at WOTS. In fact, our Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training is an integral part of our organization.

For years now, our OSHA team has provided low cost 10 and 30-hour training to workers in construction and general industry.

These trainings focus on educating workers on the laws that protect workers and of the various hazards that put worker's lives at risk.

This past month, our OSHA team wrapped up a simultaneous OSHA 30 training at Catholic Charities in Bronx, NY. This was a rather special training as over 60 workers graduated and received the necessary certification to work in the state of New York.

In 2017, WOTS trained over 460 workers in the tri-state areas and our work in this area continues to grow.

In addition to the training in both construction and general, our OSHA work has also taken WOTS to disaster-stricken areas. In fact, our OSHA trainer and co-founder Diana Mejia was chosen to train workers in Houston and Puerto Rico following the devastation left behind by natural disasters.

EYE ON IT

A New Attack Immigration?

While the current administration's attack on the undocumented immigration has been constant and blatant, there has been little focus on legal immigration. But this seems likely to change as the Department of Homeland Security has unveiled a plan that could introduce hefty penalties to individuals who claim benefits for which they may qualify.

In fact, under this plan individuals adjusting their status, who claim benefits they may qualify for can become ineligible for green cards. This is can become a major issue for parents of US-born children who use certain health programs.

Read More:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-trump-administrations-new-plan-to-punish-legal-immigrants/2018/05/05/6eb12522-4e51-11e8-af46-b1d6dc0d9bfe_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.7e376102fa65

This Month's Member Highlight

This month we want to highlight our Advocacy Co-Ordinator and Lead Organizer, Brian Lozano

Since 2015, Brian has been one of WOTS' main leaders. In his time here, Brian has lead several campaigns including the expansion of driver's licenses, fight for a clean Dream, and state financial aid. In his time here, Brian has become WOTS' point person, but he is also dedicated to developing and empowering local community leaders to fulfill their own political agency.

Apart from his work in the community, Brian has also been focusing on his academics as he is currently pursuing on entering law school and becoming a successful lawyer.

Thank you for all you do Brian!





**Become a
Member
Today!**

Upcoming Events

- Campaign Events

- Driver's license call banking June 2nd @ 4:00pm Morristown office
- Canvassing event June 5th @ All Day Event Contact Us for More Information
- Driver's License Rally June 16th @ 4:00 pm Morristown Green

- Recurring Events

- Directly Impacted Immigration Committee: 13th, 27th @7:30pm Morristown office
- Migrant Rights Working Group: June 4th, 18th @7:30pm Morristown office
- Immigrant Justice Committee – Morristown: June 11th, 25th @7:30pm Morristown office
- Immigrant Justice Committee – Dover: June: June 5th, 19th @7:30pm Contact Us for more Information

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Wind of the Spirit
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