



"...to the ends that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests."

NEWS

National Lawyers Guild • San Francisco Bay Area Chapter

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The Campaign Against Unjust Immigrant Laws in Sacramento/Davis

By Mercedes Castillo, 3L UC Davis

On March 10th, I helped organize a teach-in/brownout in Sacramento that started our grass-roots efforts for the subsequent demonstrations that took place on March 25th, April 10th and May 1st. Our first goal was to educate the community on HR 4437. NLG law students Katie Ruhl, Sarah Farnsworth and Steve Iverson analyzed hundreds of pages of legislation and put together fact sheets for the community.

Over 300 Woodland High School students walked-out on March 31st and several were harassed, beat-up and arrested by the police. When I discovered this I immediately started a plan of action to go out to the high schools and teach the students about their rights. With the help of MEChA at UC Davis, I went out to several high schools to do Know Your Rights trainings. I was able to mobilize undergrad students and law students to be trained on basic student and protestor rights. Taking materials from NLG and Midnight Special websites, I held legal observer trainings for students and community members to train hundreds of volunteers for our April 10 action. With the help of the Coalition Against Unjust Immigration Laws (CAUIL) in Sacramento, I attended various conferences for high school students to talk about their role in this movement and safety issues.

I was interviewed on 103.5 the Bomb, a popular hip-hop show in Sacramento where I talked about the impact of the anti-immigrant legislations and people's legal rights. Along with Esmeralda Zendejas, another King Hall student and now NLG Member, we developed legal fliers in English and Spanish on protestor's rights when marching without permits. We gathered phone numbers for employees to call with questions about adverse employer actions. These fliers were distributed nationally through the National Latina/Latino Law Student Association to assist groups organizing local demonstrations throughout the country.

On April 10th several hundred students (law, undergrad, high school and middle school) and community members marched 10 miles from Davis to Sacramento without



any problems with the police. We joined the rest of the 10,000 people in Sacramento to protest anti-immigration legislation. This demonstration was in conjunction with CAUIL's efforts in Sacramento. Legal fliers were given out to all of the demonstrators.

We continued to organize for the May 1st actions. We educated the community. We went out to businesses and asked them to support the national boycott. We trained more students to march safely. On May 1st we had more than 20,000 people on the streets of Sacramento and no reported incidents with the police!

The actions in Sacramento and Davis would not have been as successful had it not been for the confidence that the NLG has instilled in me to use my legal skills for mass movement. I am especially grateful to the NLG for being a part of this immigrant movement. I am very proud to be a Guild member!

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