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ICO Leaders Join LA, Orange County Partners for Health Care Reform Rally

ICO leaders from Second Samoan Church UCC, First Congregational Church UCC and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Long Beach joined fellow PICO National Network affiliates LA Voice and Orange County Congregational Community Organization (OCCCCO) at a health care reform rally August 11 in Los Angeles. The rally was one of dozens held across the country urging the U.S. Congress to pass meaningful health care reform that includes affordability standards.



Eleven ICO leaders and staff joined some 15 leaders from Orange County congregations and dozens of participants from across Los Angeles at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. The rally was positive and prayerful and energized our leaders to engage even more forcefully on health care.

Following the rally, ICO and OCCCCO leaders visited the Los Angeles offices of U.S. Sen. Diane Feinstein and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. We met with staff of Sen. Feinstein to urge her to support meaningful reform and ICO leaders delivered a letter. We then met with staff of Gov. Schwarzenegger to express our extreme disappointment with the governor's decision to severely cut the State's Healthy Families program.

While ICO and OCCCCO leaders felt generally positive about the conversation with Sen. Feinstein's staff, there was a lot of dissatisfaction and anger about the interaction with Gov. Schwarzenegger's Chief Deputy Director Lisa Kalustian. Ms. Kalustian stated several times that the governor's hands were tied and he was forced to make



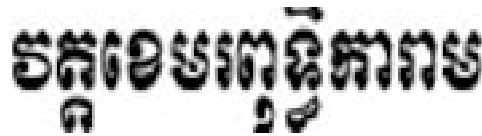
Painful cuts because of the failure of his ballot initiatives earlier this year and the fact that the California Legislature sent him an unbalanced budget. Our leaders argued in turn that this was an opportunity for the governor to exercise leadership, instead of hiding behind bureaucratic excuses.

The Los Angeles rally was part of a PICO-led national day of action that generated a tremendous amount of local and national media coverage, including NPR, CNN, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Orlando Sentinel, and front page stories in other key media markets. Click [here](#) for a partial listing of news stories, and [here](#) for some great video spots.

On Thursday, PICO National Network senior staff joined with Community Catalyst and the Center for American Progress in a meeting with two senior White House health care staffers on the importance of the affordability standard. The staffers expressed great appreciation for Tuesday's national day of action, coming as it did at an extremely difficult time in the health care reform effort.

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Wat Khmer Buddhikaram to host Air Quality Prayer Vigil August 26



Wat Khmer Buddhikaram, the Khmer Buddhist Temple on Long Beach's West Side, will host an interdenominational prayer vigil on Aug. 26 as the West Long Beach community continues to confront threats to local air quality and community health.

The vigil will run from 7 to 8 pm in the front parking lot of the Temple, located at 2100 West Willow Street, at the corner of Willow and Webster abutting the existing ICTF railyard. The plan is for clergy and lay members of each participating congregation to lead prayers in their own tradition with the goal of having the community praying together for health and guidance moving forward as they confront local railyard expansion plans and other port-related goods movement infrastructure projects.


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ICO Hosts Immigration/Health Care Forum, U.S. Reps. Sanchez and Richardson Invited



Continuing its push on achieving meaningful reform on the United States' broken health care and immigration systems, ICO leaders from several member congregations will host a community forum on Monday, August 31. U.S. Reps. Linda Sanchez and Laura

Richardson have been invited to attend. The forum will run from



6:30pm to 8:00pm in the Parish Hall at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, 600 Olive Avenue.

The forum builds upon the work of ICO and other PICO National Network affiliates (*see above*) to persuade federal legislators to hold firm on health care reform. In addition, the forum will also focus on conveying to Long Beach's federal representatives the importance of fixing the country's immigration system, especially for a city as diverse as Long Beach, with its sizable Latino/Latina, Cambodian, Tongan, Samoan and Filipino populations.

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