POETS CALL FOR HEALING, TOLERANCE, REFLECTION AND PEACE ON STEPS OF US CONGRESS IN THE WAKE OF ARIZONA TRAGEDY, PASSAGE OF ARIZONA SB 1070 & HB 2281, THE DEATH OF THE DREAM ACT & DEPORTATION OF VETERANS

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Los Angeles, CA – On Saturday, February 5, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm, poets taking part in the 2011 AWP (Association of Writers & Writing Program) Conference & Bookfair in Washington, DC, (February 2 - 5, 2011) will hold a hold a press conference, a symbolic “Floricanto“ (a collective poetry reading), and a rally on the steps of the US Capitol to bring attention to immigration issues under consideration by the US Congress and state governments that could have a direct effect on the civil rights of everyone as well as to create awareness about the little known deportation of U.S. military veterans who have served in the Middle East.

“Poets Responding to SB 1070” is a collective of US poets who came together and created a Facebook page after the passage of Senate Bill 1070 in Arizona. The Facebook page has become a public forum for poetry and politics, with over 4,700 members, 900 posted poems, and more than 500,000 visits to date with thousands of visitors daily.

A diverse group of distinguished US poets have been invited to lend their support to this poetic call for national dialogue on healing, tolerance, reflection and reconciliation. Poets who have been asked join the prestigious assembly of literary voices include Juan Felipe Herrera, Martin Espada, Sonia S‡nchez, Susan Deer Cloud, Pam Uschuk, Tara Betts, Andre Yang, Sarah Browning, Rich Villar, Oscar Bermeo, Nephtali De Leon, Luis Rodr’guez, Helena Maria Viramontes and the Chair of the 2011 AWP Conference, Francisco Aragón, among others. The symbolic poetry reading will also include poets Francisco X. Alarcón, Carmen Calatayud, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Odilia Galvan Rodriguez, Abel Salas, and Hedy Trevino of “Poets Responding to SB 1070.” Manuel and Valente Valenzuela, veterans facing deportation will also participate.

Invitations have been extended to Congressmen Xavier Becerra, Raœl Grijalva, and Luis Gutiérrez, as well as Senators Bern ie Sanders and Barbara Boxer who are being called upon to support humane and fair consideration of issues affecting the immigrant community as well as Latino and immigrant veterans who have served in the US military and yet face family separation because of deportation enforcement in their households.

The rally and reading bring attention to several key issues currently under consideration by the US Congress and our national leadership. These include the following: the attempts to amend the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution and thereby strip children of US citizenship if they are born to parents who are not US citizens; the failure of Congress to pass the Dream Act; the Arizona SB 1070 and other anti-immigrant copycat state laws like Kentucky 6; the challenges to Arizona HB 2281 that prohibits the teaching of ethnic studies in schools in Arizona; the need for comprehensive, humane Immigration Reform; the defense of civil rights for all; and the outrageous attempts to deport veterans who have served in the US military.

Background

In April 2010, in response to a controversial law in Arizona, the Facebook page "Poets Responding to SB 1070" was created. It is now a widely recognized public forum for exchange of poetics and politics. It reflects the political imagination of multicultural poetic expressions in support of a resurgent civil rights Movement for comprehensive and just immigration reform as a groundbreaking collective poetic project that involves thousands of engaged participants, hundred of poems, and thousands of posted comments. “Poets Responding to SB 1070” has become a very significant poetic outlet for poets of all ages and ethnic backgrounds. It is redefining the role of digital poetry and of poets in society.

"Poets Responding to SB 1070" w as founded by poet, writer and University of California, Davis professor Francisco X. Alarcón. Other poet moderators include Odilia Galván Rodr'guez, Alma Luz Villanueva, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Carmen Calatayud, Hedy Garc'a Treviño, Andrea Hernandez Holm, Elena Diaz Bjorkquist, Abel Salas, Meg Withers, Scott Maurer, Israel Francisco Haros López, and Edith Morris-Vásquez.

Related Events

FLORICANTO IN WASHINGTON, DC: A MULTICULTURAL READING IN RESPONSE TO SB 1070; Fri., Feb. 4, 2011, 5:30 – 9 pm, True Reformer Bldg, 1200 U St., NW, Washington, DC.

More than 25 poets will read in response to Arizona SB 1070 and in resistance to the atmosphere of national xenophobia under which the bill (and its emerging counterparts) were created. Confirmed readers: Francisco X. Alarcón, Tara Betts, Sarah Browning, Regie Cabico, Carmen Calatayud, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Susan Deer Cloud, Nephtal' de León, Mart'n Espada, Odilia Galván Rodr'guez, Carmen Gimenez Smith, Aracelis Girmay, Juan Felipe Herrera, Randall Horton, Dorianne Laux, Marilyn Nelson, Mark Nowak, Barbara Jane Reyes, Joseph Ross, Abel Salas, Sonia Sánchez, Susana Sandoval, Hedy Garc'a Treviño, Pam Uschuk, Roberto Vargas, Dan Vera, Rich Villar, and Andre Yang. Co-sponsored by the Acentos Foundation, Split This Rock, and Poets Responding to SB 1070. Hosted by Oscar Bermeo.

"POETRY OF RESISTANCE: POETS TAKE ON REASONABLE SUSPICION (ARIZONA SB 1070)" - 2011 AWP CONFERENCE PANEL; Sat., Feb. 5, 9 am - 10:15 am; Delaware Suite, Lobby Level, Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, 2660 Woodley Road NW, Washington, DC 20008

Panel Participants: Francisco X. Alarcón, Carmen Calatayud, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Odilia Galván Rodr'guez, Scott Maurer, Abel Salas, Hedy Garc'a Treviño.

For more information, to request a brief bio about or to schedule an interview with a participating poet, please contact Abel Salas at 213-321-7115 or via email: gatux007@gmail.com

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WHEN :	2011-01-25 22:03:43
WHERE :	

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