

# NEWSLETTER

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## A CRITICAL TIME FOR ACTION

We are living in a time of deep uncertainty — but also of immense possibility. **Across Pennsylvania, working people, immigrants, and communities of color are facing relentless attacks** from extremist politicians and billionaires who rig the system for their own gain. Whether through anti-immigrant policies, voter suppression, or corporate greed, the threats are real. But so is our collective power.

At Make the Road PA, we know that **true safety and dignity don't come from fearmongering or repression.** They come from strong, united communities that fight for justice.

That's why **we are organizing, building resilience, and standing in solidarity with one another.** We believe in a Pennsylvania where all of us—no matter where we come from—can thrive, have a voice in our government, and live without fear of displacement, detention, or exploitation. **This is our moment to fight back,** to build power, and to demand a future rooted in justice, dignity, and real safety for our communities.

Make the Road is building resilient Pennsylvania communities in 2025 and beyond. Through our in person **Defense Committees in Allentown, Reading and Philadelphia,** we're ensuring that immigrant families know their rights and have the tools to protect themselves. This past month we have been pushing forward **Welcoming City legislation** to make sure our towns and cities are safe and inclusive for all. We're **standing up for public education** funding because every child, no matter their zip code, deserves fully funded schools. And we continue with our issue campaign work making sure that our communities are empowered to resist injustice at every turn. This is what movement-building looks like — organizing, defending our neighbors, and demanding the future we deserve.

## Our Defense Committees



**Interested in joining? Contact your local organizer!**

## WHO KEEPS US SAFE? WE KEEP US SAFE.

This administration has shown us time and again how it seeks to attack and dehumanize our immigrant communities. But we know we are the frontlines in protecting each other. That's why we began hosting monthly in person Defense Committees across our organizing centers. We provide interpretation at our meetings.

**Defense Committees provide a way for neighbors to come together, learn their rights, share information, and create action plans** to resist ICE and police, staying connected through apps like Signal to respond quickly when needed.

Our first meetings, which had over 100 attendees, focused on knowing our rights and scenario-planning, Mexican Consul in Philadelphia attended to share legal services. In Reading, State Rep. Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, State Sen. Judy Schwank, and school board member Shayka Del Rio joined to learn how they can protect and support their communities. Defense Committees prioritize Know Your Rights education, taking action and responding quickly to raids or threats.

## ALLENTOWN PASSES WELCOMING ORDINANCE

Amid intensifying immigration rhetoric from the White House, on February 5th, **over 150 community members took action at the local level**, filling the Allentown City Council hearing to give testimony and urge council members **to pass a Welcoming City Ordinance**. This ordinance **will limit Allentown's cooperation with ICE** and was won in coalition with CAIR Philly, Lehigh SPAC, My Lehigh Valley Youth Organization, Lehigh Valley Stands Up, Muhlenberg Jewish Voice for Palestinian Liberation, and numerous other powerful community organizations.

**One of our incredible member leaders, Belem, gave testimony** at the hearing. To hear her testimony, visit our [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#)!



*"Overreach by ICE and the federal government doesn't just hurt immigrants, it hurts every single one of us."*



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *MARÍA HERNANDEZ*

María crossed the border 30 years ago and has spent much of her life in the United States, working in mushroom fields for over two decades. Her journey brought her to Make the Road PA when she sought a way to advocate for her child in school. She joined our Parents' Committee, and since then, she has become one of our most dedicated members.

María vividly remembers the fear and uncertainty that accompanied the first Trump administration but instead of backing down, she found strength in community. She is a living, breathing example of resistance. Through difficult times, she helped organize her neighbors to fight back. Learn more about being a member of Make the Road PA and building power with us [here!](#)

“Make the Road is powerful and I have grown with the organization. If we lead with Make the Road, we can get further ahead,” María says.

## STUDENTS TAKE A STAND FOR EDUCATION IN D.C.

With ongoing threats to the Department of Education under the current administration, we know **the fight for our children and youth's future is critical**. Members of our **Youth Power Project (YPP) joined Popular Democracy affiliates in Washington, D.C.**, where they performed a powerful street theater piece and **advocated for public education funding**.

Two of our YPP members, Steaven and Mariah, gave testimony on the steps of the Capitol Building about the importance of defending public education for students like themselves.



*MRPA's Youth Power Project Leader, Steaven, giving testimony*

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!**

EVERYONE HAS RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, REGARDLESS OF THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS.

**01 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT.**  
You do not have to answer any questions from an immigration official.

**02 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE TO OPEN YOUR DOOR WITHOUT A PROPER WARRANT.**  
A valid warrant must have your name and address and must be signed by a judge or magistrate.

**03 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE A SEARCH.**  
Without a warrant or probable cause, you can refuse a search of yourself, your home, and your belongings.

**04 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO AN ATTORNEY.**  
Before signing anything, you have the right to make a private phone call (unheard by the police) to your lawyer.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In times of uncertainty, staying prepared and informed is crucial. Alongside our monthly defense committees, **Make the Road PA** launched a series of informational tools to help immigrants understand their rights when engaging with ICE and be prepared for any situation.

To see all of the materials, visit [maketheroadpa.org/knowyourrights](http://maketheroadpa.org/knowyourrights).

For more information about talking to others about their rights, visit [www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/talking-to-people-about-their-rights](http://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/talking-to-people-about-their-rights)

## IN THE NEWS

Check out some of our incredible members and staff in the news over the past few weeks!

[Growing number of immigrants' rights organizations vow to fight new deportation policies](#)

[For PA immigrants, uncertainty, fear and resilience are the order of the day](#)

[Trump's immigration crackdown: Pennsylvania on edge](#)

[Allentown City Council unanimously passes 'Welcoming City' ordinance on immigration](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for an event in the coming weeks!

- Monthly Defense Committees
  - March 28, 6-8PM
  - Allentown: 144 N 7th St.
  - Reading: 522 Court St.
  - Philadelphia: 2930 Jasper St.
- Monthly Housing Committee
  - Philadelphia: March 13, 6-8PM
  - Allentown: March 13, 6-8PM
  - Reading: March 6, 6-8PM
- Parents' Committee
  - March 13, 6-8PM
  - Reading: 522 Court St.
- Monthly Membership Assembly
  - March 20, 6-8PM
  - ZOOM (contact [organizing@maketheroadpa.org](mailto:organizing@maketheroadpa.org) for link!)

