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In wake of Trump's win, Austin immigration advocates team up

LOCAL GOVT & POLITICS

By Elizabeth Findell - American-Statesman Staff

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Highlights

- The new group, Texas Here To Stay, will bring together advocacy organizations and provide legal aid clinics.
- The group will host clinics to put people in touch with immigration attorneys, match them with organizations.
- To face the world after Election Day, it's time to formally band together, Austin immigration advocacy groups have decided.

A new organization, **Texas Here to Stay**, will link efforts of immigrant assistance groups and provide legal clinics, spokeswoman Megan Sheffield announced during a news conference Monday at the Consulate General of Mexico's Austin offices. Its work will kick off with a series of "Know Your Rights" clinics starting in December to provide legal and immigration information.

Though local advocacy groups have worked together informally for years, the election of Donald Trump as president made them come together formally, said Sheffield, an attorney with the Equal Justice Center.

“A lot of the attorneys in the group were already meeting together to focus on advocacy,” she said. “When we had the results of the election, we knew there was going to be a lot of uncertainty and we needed to band together.

“We don’t know what to expect, and we don’t really want to speculate, but we want to be prepared to act, so that’s what we’re doing,” she said.



STEPHEN SPILLMAN

Texas Here To Stay spokeswoman Megan Sheffield, with Consul General Carlos González Gutiérrez (left) and Austin Mayor Steve Adler, speaks during ... [Read More](#)

The group brings together organizations including the consulate, [American Gateways](#), [the Austin Region of Justice for Our Neighbors](#), [Casa Marianella](#), [Catholic Charities of Central Texas](#), [Education Austin](#), [the Equal Justice Center](#), [the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services](#), [Texas RioGrande Legal Aid](#), [the Austin school district](#), [the Texas Law Immigration Clinic](#) and [the Workers Defense Project](#).

The group, which takes its name from the [#HereToStay](#) hashtag that circulated among immigrants and their supporters after the election, has a first event set for Dec. 3 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Reicher Drive in East Austin. The clinics will put people in touch with immigration attorneys and conduct intake interviews to match people with organizations that might be able to help them.

“There is nothing more American than making sure that everyone within our community knows their rights,” Austin Mayor Steve Adler said at the news conference.

Adler, Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt and Consul General Carlos González Gutiérrez said they were in wait-and-see mode after Trump's campaign rhetoric about cracking down on illegal immigration and **punishing localities that don't participate**.

They urged immigrants seeking assistance to reach out to Here to Stay or the consulate to avoid getting conned by fake service providers and emphasized good relations between Austin and Mexico.

"One thing that has not changed is that Austin has been and will continue to be a beacon for equity, opportunity, fairness and justice, and as a community we take care of our neighbors," Adler said. "We don't know how the new administration will play out, but there was enough said to cause fear."

For more information

Contact Texas Here to Stay at TexasHereToStay@gmail.com.

The group will host a 'Know Your Rights' clinic from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 3 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 5905 Reicher Drive in East Austin.