



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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U.S. immigrants drive bus across country to support rights, 2012

27 July

2012

to: 3 September

2012

Country: United States

Location City/State/Province: *New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee*

Goals:

To force the Democratic Party to revise its position on immigrant rights to support undocumented people.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 138. Sitdown
- 168. Nonviolent raids

Methods in 4th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 038. Marches

Methods in 5th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing

Methods in 6th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 036. Performances of plays and music
- 138. Sitdown

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- Undocumented Immigrants
- members of LGBTQ community

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Undocubus

Partners:

Ruckus Society

External allies:

Teamsters Union

Involvement of social elites:

Not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Ruckus Society
- Undocubus

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

- Teamsters Union

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: 10 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Kris Kobach, Democratic Party

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

Multiple arrests

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

Undocubus is set to ride a second time this summer.

In July 2012, the Ruckus Society trained and organized several immigration rights activists, who began an action bus tour supporting migrant rights. The bus left Phoenix, Arizona, an immigration rights hot spot, in July with the intention of reaching Charlotte to bring the voices of undocumented immigrants to the Democratic National Convention. Aboard the bus were almost thirty people, several with family connections. About half the riders identified as queer. Farias Portugal and Sandra Castro led local artists and children in the Phoenix area in painting and decorating the bus. The side read “No Papers, No Fear, a Journey for Justice”.

The bus stopped in New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. In each of these locations, undocumented people wore T-shirts reading “No Papers, No Fear”, carried banners and sat down in the street to block traffic to demand immigration reform.

On 31 July, after several near-breakdowns in the Rockies, the bus arrived in Denver Colorado where they held training workshops on mobilizing undocumented immigrants and their families and allies.

On 19 August, the protesters wore their T-shirts and held banners outside the hearing on immigration law led by Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach in Alabama. Kobach was testifying in support of his controversial immigration law and attempting to dissuade legislators that the law encouraged racial profiling. Members of the “Undocubus” team attempted to testify. When they were refused, they sat down in the road and blocked the street outside the courthouse. From there, they

stormed the lobby of the Sheraton hotel where Kobach was staying until sheriffs forced them out.

In 27 August 2012, the Undocubus crew arrived in Birmingham and pulled up in front of the Commission on Civil Rights' Hearing on Immigration. Next, the bus stopped in Knoxville, where a local sheriff had proposed the introduction of 287(G), a law that requires police officers to screen immigration status upon arrest. The riders marched through the town, and many civilians joined their protest. Police arrested four campaigners, including two undocumented people, a nineteen-year-old and a sixty-five-year-old woman. The riders also organized training workshops to encourage further activism after the bus left Knoxville.

On 1 September, the bus arrived in New Orleans, where it broke down before the protests could begin. The riders considered abandoning the bus and began looking to rent a new one, when Steve Howell, a Teamster member offered to help. He repaired the bus successfully, and outfitted it with a Teamster license plate and a logo on the side.

On 3 September 2012, the bus arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina. At this point, more than fifty people were riding the bus. Members attended the Democratic National Convention. Ten undocumented immigrants organized by the Undocubus arrived at the convention and held up signs that read "undocumented." All ten were arrested immediately. The rest of the protesters sat down on the street and chanted, "no papers, no problem!"

A band made of migrant day laborers called "Los Jornaleros del Norte" performed a traditional Mexican ballad about life as a day laborer. There was significant media attention, and the next day the ten arrested immigrants were released with no charges. However, their presence seemed to have no direct effect on the Democratic Party's approach to immigration law. The Undocubus is expected to travel across country in another campaign in the summer of 2013.

Research Notes

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