

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Contacts:

Carlos Perea (English & Spanish)

(714) 605-6666 | [carlos@harborinstituteoc.org](mailto:carlos@harborinstituteoc.org)

Vincent Tran (Vietnamese)

(714) 775-6789 | [vincent@vietrise.org](mailto:vincent@vietrise.org)



## Santa Ana Families for Fair Elections Launches Campaign to Expand Local Voting Rights for All Santa Ana Noncitizen Residents

*The campaign announcement comes as the California Court of Appeals sets precedent by ruling constitutional San Francisco's noncitizen voting ordinance, which had been challenged in courts.*

**Santa Ana, CA** - Santa Ana Families for Fair Elections (SAFFE), a multiracial coalition of community organizations and residents in Santa Ana, announces the launch of a campaign urging the Santa Ana City Council to expand voting rights for all Santa Ana residents regardless of their immigration status. The campaign aims to enfranchise the nearly one out of every four residents in the city who are noncitizens and currently excluded from voting in local elections.

**Maria de Los Angeles Piña**, an immigrant resident of Santa Ana for 20 years and member of SAFFE, stated, "City funding and resources are allocated based on political representation. We live in a city where the majority of residents are renters and many of them are immigrants and refugees that cannot vote. We need political representation that reflects us. We must have the right to vote to have our voices represented."

Santa Ana is home to the largest share of noncitizens in Orange County. Out of the city's estimated 313,818 residents, 74,125 (23.62%) are noncitizens who currently do not have the right to vote for city council elections. At the heart of SAFFE's campaign lies the principle of democratic inclusion that every resident's voice should be heard in decisions that significantly impact their daily lives.

"We are launching this campaign to end the political exclusion of immigrants and refugees in Santa Ana," said **Carlos Perea**, Executive Director of the **Harbor Institute for Immigrant & Economic Justice**. "It is undemocratic to exclude a large number of residents living in the city from voting in local elections. We must close the gap between those who govern and the governed."

**Phuong Vu**, a Vietnamese senior resident of Santa Ana for 27 years and member of SAFFE, stated, "The city needs to expand the right to vote for all residents regardless of immigration status. As immigrants, we also contribute to the city. This will only strengthen our city and showcase freedom and equality. It will help uplift the spirit of the Vietnamese community in Santa Ana and improve our living conditions. I urge the City Council to help us pass noncitizen voting to improve Santa Ana for everyone."

**Apolonio Cortes**, an immigrant resident of Santa Ana for 26 years and member of SAFFE, adds, "I live in Santa Ana, and I know the issues in my neighborhood and in the city very well. Although it's important for elected officials to listen to us, that is not enough. We must also have the opportunity to vote to ensure city officials are serving all residents. It is very important to empower a community that has economically contributed to the city."

Earlier this month, the First District Court of Appeal issued a ruling in favor of San Francisco's noncitizen voting ordinance, which has allowed immigrant parents to vote in school board elections since 2016 but was legally challenged last year. This sets precedent for charter cities like Santa Ana to expand voting rights to noncitizens.

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Santa Ana Families for Fair Elections (SAFFE) is a multiracial coalition of community organizations and residents in Santa Ana dedicated to fostering belonging among immigrant and refugee communities and bolstering democratic inclusion.