

Largest Latino Civil Rights Group Finds Ore. Home



EUGENE, Ore. (AP) – An organization that bills itself as the nation’s largest Latino civil rights and advocacy group is establishing a base in Oregon.

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) says it has received calls to establish an Oregon base from young people who stand to benefit from the federal DREAM Act, which would provide conditional permanent residency to certain illegal immigrants who graduate from U.S. high schools.

“We’re excited about the historical step of [LULAC] coming to Oregon,” said Juan Carlos Valle, who made a failed bid for the city council last year. “It takes a lot of people [to get a council started], and I’m humbled by the opportunity to start the process and bring everyone together.”

LULAC approved its Lane County council last week, The Eugene Register-Guard reported.

LULAC regional vice president Mickie Solorio Luna said the group wants to “ensure a place for people in civic engagement and secure inclusion and participation of people at all levels in the community and public service.”

“We will be building upon the voting power and collaborate with groups across the board.”

The group also hopes to unify other Latino groups in Lane County.

The national organization, created in 1929, made an early splash with the 1930’s Supreme Court ruling in *Del Rio v. Salvatierra*, in which LULAC sued a Texas school district for segregating Mexican-Americans, 24 years before the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling declared segregated schools unconstitutional.

Learning about LULAC’s historic role in such cases, chapter secretary Silverio Mogart said he wanted to get involved with LULAC but was disappointed to learn there was no local council, or any council in the state of Oregon. Now that Lane County has a council of its own, Mogart said he is honored to be part of it.

“It’s going to be a great opportunity for everybody to be more aware of what’s going on in the Latino community,” Mogart said. “We’ll be more able to work together with other members of the community to have a strong Latino voice.”

One idea Valle hopes to pursue is a symposium featuring LULAC members and other local civil rights advocates from all backgrounds, community members, and government and private industry representatives.

“In the end, struggle is struggle, and opportunity is opportunity,” Valle said. “We want to come up with ways to work together.”

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