



Activist Groups COPS and Metro Alliance Spreading Message to Suburbs

By Morgan Montalvo - Oct 17, 2018

COPS/Metro Alliance, San Antonio's decades-old social issues and voter rights coalition, has long been identified with the inner city. Now the group is taking its populist message into suburbia, WOAI News reports.

The organization last night hosted a town hall at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Helotes, and invited Republican and Democrat incumbents and challengers for state and Congressional offices that represent West Bexar County and San Antonio's south and west sides to attend and publicly state their positions on four issues: restoring Texas public school funding; immigration reform; reining in the "payday lending" industry; and increasing job training and re-training programs for displaced workers and in historically under-served areas.



Photo by Morgan Montalvo

The priorities forum drew a near-capacity crowd made up of members of more than a dozen area Roman Catholic parishes and at least one Protestant church.

Speaker Ana Esparza, a community advocate for the South San Antonio Independent School District, said it's time for state government to stop earmarking funds for for-profit charter schools and restore corresponding cuts to public education.

"We want them to bring money back into the schools so our programs are not cut," she said.

Organizer Steve Mendoza said payday lending's current business practices victimize not only the urban poor, but increasing numbers in working-and middle-class neighborhoods.

"We're not against someone or a business making profit," Mendoza said. "It should be in line with what other banks need to conform to."

Mendoza says COPS/Metro Alliance decided to become active in more conservative, affluent suburban communities outside the city's inner and outer freeway loops because emerging economic and social challenges are not defined by geography or political affiliation.

With the 2018 midterm elections less than three weeks away, COPS/Metro Alliance today launches a get-out-the-vote phone banking and canvassing initiative.

Next week, organizers say, the organization will announce another major outreach program.

COPS, or Citizens Organized for Public Service, and the Metro Alliance are a coalition of school groups, churches and unions that, since the early 1990s, have worked together to amplify citizen voices on issues affecting San Antonio.

PHOTO: Members of COPS/Metro Alliance deliver postcards from local immigration reform supporters addressed to state and Congressional offices that represent West Bexar County and San Antonio's south and west sides during Tuesday's COPS/Metro Alliance town hall meeting at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Helotes.