

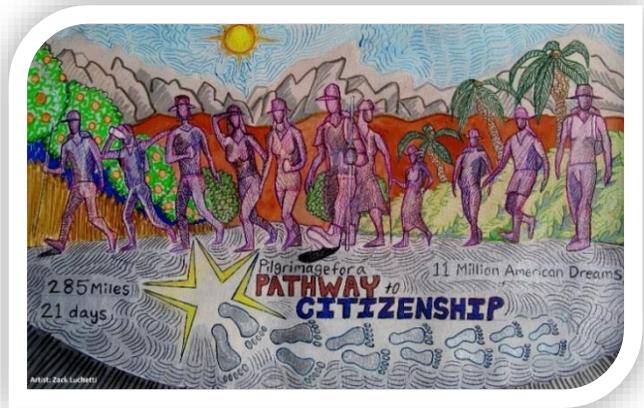
# PILGRIM PROFILES

 PICO California 285 MILES | 21 DAYS | 11 MILLION AMERICAN DREAMS

## ROGELIO BAÑUELOS

*age 24 turning up the heat on Congressional District 48*

Rogelio Bañuelos is a 24-year-old DREAMer from Costa Mesa, in Orange County. He is walking to fulfill his dream of seeing undocumented immigrants be fully integrated into their communities and the larger United States of America. “I want people to learn that in order to accomplish big dreams it is essential to make big sacrifices, sacrifices that are both good for society and pleasing to God,” says Rogelio.



## VICKY AND ENRIQUE BRAVO

*age 46 and 43 turning up the heat on Congressional District 48*

Vicky and Enrique Bravo are the only married couple on the pilgrimage team. They are residents of the City of Orange and active members of their Catholic Parish in Costa Mesa. They have been married for 22 years. The Bravo's have four children, each of whom is active in PICO's Campaign for Citizenship. The family came to California in 1988 from Mexico City. Vicky is a hairstylist in Costa Mesa and Enrique is an electrician. Both are taking time off of work in order to participate in the 21-day pilgrimage—just one more sacrifice in their much larger effort to provide opportunity for their children, Luis, Daniel, Jessica and Alex. “I am involved because I want to support my children in this huge fight,” says Vicky. “They are the engine of my life.” Like Vicky, Enrique was motivated to join the pilgrimage by his children, who travelled throughout California and to Washington, D.C. in support of the Campaign for Citizenship. “My four children have been participating in the effort to open a pathway to citizenship. I am walking to support them and because I, too, want to be a part of this great fight,” says Enrique.

## DIANA CAMPOS

*age 18 turning up the heat on Congressional District 6*

Nineteen-year-old Diana Campos, from Sacramento, is the youngest of the pilgrims. Diana came to California with her family when she was just a year old and grew up, as she says, “like an American.” As she entered high school, though, the implications of her undocumented status were inescapable. “The more I was told to try hard, the less I felt a need to, because I didn't see college in my future,” she recalls. The sacrifices and deferred dreams of her parents, who work long hours cleaning apartments as owners of a small business, motivated Diana to stay focused on school and her dream of being a singer/songwriter. In her senior year of high school, Diana's hard work and musical talent was rewarded – she was admitted to the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston. But once again, her undocumented status stood in the way. “I had to decline because there was no way we could afford it and I wasn't eligible for scholarships,” recalls Diana. “It was hard watching my friends get their lives together – get their licenses, be able to work, and do simple things I couldn't do,” says Diana. “I am one of thousands of kids, students, young adults, who feel American--who are American,” says Diana. “I am walking for me and for all undocumented Americans living in limbo trying to find ourselves. And I do it for my parents and all the other original 'dreamers' who have sacrificed their lives to let us live ours. They cannot be forgotten, and they must be included in a pathway to citizenship to keep our families united.”



**ADRIANA FLORES**

*age 40 turning up the heat on Congressional District 16*

Adriana Flores is from Merced. She has been living in the Central Valley for 20 years, waiting for an opportunity to emerge from the shadows with her family. “I immigrated in search of the American dream that today has become a nightmare,” says Adriana. “I do not feel free and live every day in fear. I never know if I will return to my house with my car or if my family will be separated. For twenty years, I have been living in the shadows without a chance. That's why I've decided to fight for change.” Adriana will celebrate her 41<sup>st</sup> birthday on August 20. This year, rather than marking the occasion with cake and presents with her husband and son, she will be rising before dawn and walking 15 miles from Atwater to Merced with 10 other pilgrims. Her gift, says Adriana, will be arriving in her own community with a powerful message about the power of faith and action to achieve the dream of citizenship for 11 million aspiring Americans. “I am walking to demonstrate that we are not criminals--that we are hardworking people of faith. This sacrifice is for all our brothers and sisters who have died crossing the border,” says Adriana. “We are good people and we have to put our faith into action.”

**GUADALUPE MABELL VALDEZ GOMEZ**

*age 38 turning up the heat on Congressional District 8*

Guadalupe Mabell Valdez Gomez (Maybell) is a mother, a person of faith, a businesswoman. She lives in Apple Valley, in the High Desert. She believes the pilgrimage offers “an opportunity to put my body and my whole being towards addressing the pain I have lived with for the past 22 years.” Maybell immigrated to the United States in 1991 from Mexico. It was the last time she saw her son, who still lives in Mexico. Several years ago, she paid over \$10,000 trying to legalize her status and paperwork, but became a victim of fraud and lost all of that money. The loss couldn't have come at a more critical time. Shortly afterwards, Maybell had to shut down her mobile business that employed 15 people because she couldn't obtain a driver's license. “I know there are many families like my own that are divided by our broken immigration system, and I will stand in support of those families, who like my own, dream of having their families reunited,” says Maybell. “We must remember to smile and laugh, walking together to overcome the pain. Immigration reform will transform our lives and allow me to achieve my life's dream of seeing my son again.”

**ANA GLORIA GUARDADO**

*age 50 turning up the heat on Congressional District 19*

Ana Gloria Guardado, was born in El Salvador. She grew up in the deepest parts of the mountains, without the benefit of a formal education. In 1981, at the age of 19, Ana immigrated to the United States to escape the horror of her country's brutal civil war. She worked in the fields for many years, earning low pay and constantly at risk of detainment and deportation. In 1984, Ana moved to San José and started another chapter of her life – attending night school and working for a family, taking care of their children and their home. Over the next several years, Ana earned both her Bachelors and Masters degrees. Today, Ana dedicates her time to working with local nonprofits and workers unions. “I love adding my grain of sand towards making a difference in this world,” says Ana. “I am a human being that is very sensitive towards the suffering of others and that's why I fight for respect and equality for all.”

**ADRIANA HERNANDEZ**

*age 26 turning up the heat on Congressional District 10*

Adriana Hernandez was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico. At the age of two, her family immigrated to the United States, where they lived for over 20 years in Redwood City, California. After graduating from high school in 2004, Adriana attended the University of California at Santa Cruz. Despite being a DREAMer and struggling to finance her education, Adriana managed to obtain her Bachelor of Arts Degree with a double major in Latin American Studies and American Studies. In 2011, Adriana became a U.S. citizen and continued pursuing her education by attending the University of San Francisco, where she graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Affairs. Adriana currently resides in Patterson, CA and is committed to promoting the importance of obtaining a higher education among her family and community.

**MARIA LOPEZ**

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*age 19 turning up the heat on Congressional District 31*

Maria Lopez is a 19-year-old DREAMer from San Bernardino and a sophomore at UC Irvine. She arrived in the United States when she was a year and a half old and left California for the first time just a few weeks ago to attend a National Congress for student government representatives held in New Jersey. She describes herself as an Undocumented American. Maria is walking because she believes the pilgrimage will help to call the public's attention to how comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship will change people's lives. "Knowing that there are so many people who are scared and hiding in the shadows empowers me to fight for them and represent them," says Maria. Like all of the pilgrims, Maria is turning up her life on hold for 21 days while she participates in the walk from Sacramento to Bakersfield. Perhaps most difficult and heartbreaking is the knowledge that she may not be able to see her grandparents, who are visiting from Zacatecas, Mexico, while she will be gone. "As time passes and the danger in Zacatecas increases, I dread not having a chance to see them before something horrible happens."

**ESTEFANY MENDEZ**

*age 24 turning up the heat on Congressional District 11*

Estefany Méndez describes herself as a DREAMer, a journalist, and an activist. She is a resident of Contra Costa County. Estefany's family immigrated to the United States when she was 10 to flee political oppression in Mexico. Her father nearly lost his life for doing his job as a journalist and exposing illegal practices amongst the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico. Despite her undocumented status, Estefany was able to earn her undergraduate degree in broadcast journalism from Brigham Young University in Rexburg, Idaho. Estefany says she is following in the footsteps of my father as a journalist and gaining faith and strength from her mother. "I am walking because I want to counter the stereotype that has dehumanized me and other immigrants in this country due to our legal status," says Estefany. "This is not about politics," she adds. "This is about human dignity."

**SAMANTHA ROMERO**

*age 19 turning up the heat on Congressional District 12*

Samantha Romero, a 19-year-old DREAMer from San Francisco, came to the United States when she was nine years old. She didn't know her father until she arrived in California in 2003, since he had immigrated to the U.S. ahead of his wife and children to get a job and make a home for the family. Samantha wants to become a professional make-up artist, but was denied admission into a training program because she is not a U.S. citizen. She currently attends San Francisco City College and has dreams of opening her own business one day. "I am walking because I want to encourage others to step out and to not be afraid of speaking out and taking a stand," says Samantha. "My parents crossed the border looking for a better future for me and my sister." She adds, I am fighting for a better future for them, just like they did for me."

**DR. GONZALO F. SANTOS**

*age 63 turning up the heat on Congressional District 23*

Dr. Gonzalo F. Santos came to the United States on a visa to pursue graduate studies in science. Over the years, he became a permanent resident, worked as a science teacher in Colorado, and eventually pursued a Ph.D. in sociology in New York. Over the last two decades, he has taught at California State University Bakersfield, in the Southern San Joaquin Valley. This year he became a U.S. citizen. Dr. Santos was born in Mexico, raised in the Gulf port of Tampico in the State of Tamaulipas. He is married with two sons and one daughter. His wife's family, from the state of Zacatecas, Mexico, began coming to California in the Bracero Era to work in the fields. Many family members, including her, benefitted from the 1986 amnesty and are now college-educated U.S. citizens. In 1968, Dr. Santos participated in the pro-democracy student movement in Mexico City, which planted the seeds for the country's democratic transition, which is still unfolding. During his life in the United States, now spanning over four decades, he has participated in many social movements for peace and justice, including the antiwar, farmworker, Chicano, solidarity, union, and immigrant movements. He is currently the California Faculty Association representative in the Kern Coalition for Citizenship."



**JOSTH STENNER**

*age 22 turning up the heat on Congressional District 23*

Josth Stenner (pronounced Josh), a resident of Bakersfield, is the only person in his family of five that is a U.S. citizen. He has seen firsthand the difference it has made between his life and opportunities and the challenges faced by his siblings and his family – from education, to access to affordable healthcare, to employment. “I grew up knowing that the only difference between me and my family is the geography of our birthplace,” says Josh. “This is why I want to walk. I want to advocate for them and countless other people who have faced similar situations at the hands of our broken immigration system. I believe that now is the time for change so that my family and other families like mine might have the ability to chase their dreams. I’ll do whatever I can to make sure 11 million aspiring Americans are not excluded from the great dream that this country has offered to countless others before.”

**SHAKEEL SYED**

*age 63 turning up the heat on Congressional District 23*

Shakeel Syed is the Executive Director of the Islamic Shura Council, a federation of mosques & Muslim organizations serving more than half a million Muslims in Southern California. He also serves on the board of directors of the Los Angeles Council of Religious Leaders and also serves as an executive board member of the ACLU – Los Angeles. Shakeel lives by the adage that, “only together, can we make a difference.” His profound belief in that principle, pushed him to join the pilgrimage. He has a double Masters in Sciences and Arts and has been living in Southern California for more than two decades with his wife and four children.

**ANDREW VUE**

*age 26 turning up the heat on Congressional District 6*

Andrew Vue was born and raised in Sacramento and is part of the area’s Hmong community. His father and mother were born in Laos and immigrated to the United States in 1982 after walking from Laos to Thailand on their road to freedom. Andrew describes himself as having grown up between two worlds – that of his undocumented parents and his own world as a U.S. citizen and all of the freedoms that “having papers” afforded him. Andrew attended the California State University of Sacramento, where he served as the Vice President of the Hmong University Student Association. He graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Government. “I am walking because it is important for people of Asian descent to be part of this fight,” says Andrew. We all need to be part of the effort to secure citizenship and address the injustices that undocumented immigrants experience every day.”

