

The following op-ed was posted to the Online Edition of the *Albuquerque Journal* on Friday, Sept. 2, 2011 (available online at <http://www.abqjournal.com/main/2011/09/02/opinion/whos-real-native-new-mexican.html>):

### **Who's Real Native New Mexican?**

By **Michael A. Olivas** / Santa Fe resident

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez, a native of El Paso, has made a priority of appearing to clamp down on driver's license fraud and has enacted a questionable administrative end-run around the New Mexico Legislature's refusal to rescind the law according such identification and certification to the undocumented population.

In order to challenge this unlawful maneuver, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund has sued to end her administrative practice. In a press release, the Martinez administration has resorted to name-calling to suggest that MALDEF has no dog in this New Mexico fight: "This is a lawsuit by an out-of-state group that is trying to stop the state's efforts to confront the identity theft and fraud that exists due to the issuance of driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. This out-of-state group may believe that New Mexicans do not have a right to know who is residing within their borders, and as such, they may not have a problem trying to protect the illegal immigrants who have come to New Mexico from throughout the country to get our driver's license and leave. But New Mexicans have a decidedly different point of view, and so does Governor Martinez."

Attorney David Urias is an Albuquerque lawyer, while I am a native New Mexican – unlike the governor – and we do not agree. The immediate past-chair of the board is a native and resident of New Mexico, Patricia Madrid.

As the governor (a lawyer) knows, MALDEF, a national organization registered in Texas and with headquarters in California, will go wherever it is necessary to end such lawlessness, as it did when Albuquerque police officers illegally arrested students at Del Norte High School for the crime of loitering-while-Mexican.

MALDEF prevailed in that lawsuit, and will do so again in this matter.

MALDEF has brought suits in New Mexico several times since its founding in 1968, always as needed, to prevent various agencies and school districts from acting badly, and often, stupidly. This case is in that vein: The plaintiffs are New Mexicans, the lawyers are New Mexicans, and the crime is occurring in New Mexico.

New Mexicans should be glad that "an out-of-state group" is trying to stop this governor from carrying out her anti-immigrant actions and thwarting the will of the Legislature. Not only is the current law good policy, but she knows it. How does she expect to require insurance of all drivers, should she have her way?

Of course, reasonable actions can be taken to make certain licensed drivers are genuine residents, but that is not her purpose, and as the chief executive of the state, she must abide by the law in carrying out her duties. As a native of Texas, she, of all people, should respect the work of MALDEF in all states.

Michael A. Olivas is a member of the MALDEF board. These opinions are his own, and do not represent anyone else's views.