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El Paso Walmart Attack Federal Sentencing, An Opportunity To Halt Hateful Rhetoric Against Immigrant Communities

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EL PASO, TEXAS — Today, the sentencing hearing for the El Paso Walmart gunman is set to begin. The shooter is expected to face the families of his victims.

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center has advocated for 29 families and individuals impacted by this horrific terrorist attack for almost four years.

Gloria Amesquita, a spokesperson and legal assistant with Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, shared the following statement:

“Four years ago, a violent man, espousing hateful rhetoric, and driven by a xenophobic worldview, came to our community. He killed 23 people and injured 23 more. Since that day, Las Americas has proudly worked to ensure that immigrant victims of that heinous attack have the support they need. I am proud of the immigrant victims of this shooting who have contributed to our community and are on a path to justice and healing.

“Today marks a milestone in this process. However, it has not come easily and reminds us of how much care and support we must continue to provide each other. To the victims, I thank them for their resilience and courage. I also offer my gratitude for Las Americas’ continued commitment to doing all we can to meet their immigration and humanitarian needs. In addition, we urge the federal government to take steps to
ensure that those harmed by this terrorist attack have access to mental health resources and can seek safety in our country.

“I sound a warning to the rest of the community and the nation. While these sentencing proceedings provide some closure to this tragedy, the conditions in our society that produced this hate and violence remain and have grown more perilous. Our politicians toss around rhetoric that echoes, verbatim, the shooter; his hate reverberates across our TVs and Twitter feeds. As a country, we are bullied into letting our fears define our lives and the world, but doing so yields only mortal peril. We do not have to accept this. We can embrace tolerance and care. We can reject violence, division, and hate. We can ignore those offering anger and overcome those bullying us into being our vile selves.”

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Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit providing high-quality legal services to low income immigrants. Since its founding in 1987, Las Americas has served close to 70,000 persons, with a strong focus on women, children, families, the LGBTQ community and asylum seekers.