

# DENVER CITY COUNCIL



## Proclamation No. 24-1183

### A Proclamation Honoring La Sociedad Protección Mutua de Trabajadores Unidos Concilio NO. 7 during Hispanic Heritage Month

**WHEREAS**, Hispanic Heritage Month, celebrated annually from September 15 to October 15, honors the rich cultural history, heritage, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities across the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the observance of Hispanic Heritage Month began in 1968 under President Lyndon B. Johnson as a week-long celebration and was later expanded to a full month by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to include the anniversaries of independence for several Latin American countries; and

**WHEREAS**, Hispanic Americans have greatly contributed to the development, growth, and cultural fabric of our nation, excelling in diverse fields such as science, arts, education, public service, business, and civil rights advocacy; and

**WHEREAS**, La Sociedad Protección Mutua de Trabajadores Unidos (SPMDTU), founded in Antonito, Colorado, on November 26, 1900, is the oldest Hispanic civil rights and mutual aid organizations in the United States, established to combat the discrimination faced by Hispanic workers and protect their rights in the fields, railroads, and mining industries; and

**WHEREAS**, SPMDTU has played a significant role in fighting for justice and equality, including its involvement in the 1914 Alamosa School Desegregation Case, *Francisco Maestas et al. v. George H. Shone et al.*, where it raised funds to challenge discriminatory practices in education, standing as a symbol of resilience and advocacy for the Hispanic community; and

**WHEREAS**, SPMDTU Concilio 7 Secretary Dr. Antonio Esquibel has dedicated his time and talents to research the history of the Hispanic people of this area; and

**WHEREAS**, the recent restoration of the SPMDTU Headquarters Building in Antonito, Colorado, serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of this organization. Dr. Esquibel's hard work and dedication to this project have led to this building, listed in the State Register of Historic Properties and the National Register of Historic Places, has been restored with the support of grants from the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area, the Colorado State Historical Fund, and the Colorado Community Revitalization Fund, preserving its historic adobe style and renewing its place as a hub of cultural and community engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, the restored building will host artistic and historic events, as well as serve as the home for the SPMDTU Museum, providing educational opportunities for locals and visitors alike, highlighting the organization's rich history and continued commitment to improving Hispanic communities; and

**WHEREAS**, La Sociedad Protección Mutua de Trabajadores Unidos continues to fulfill its mission of enriching Hispanic communities and advocating for the civil rights of all, maintaining active local chapters throughout Colorado, New Mexico, and beyond, thus continuing to honor the sacrifices of its founders while ensuring its future impact on generations to come; and

**WHEREAS**, while this proclamation honors the rich history and contributions of La Sociedad Protección Mutua de Trabajadores Unidos and Hispanic Heritage Month, it is important to recognize that this is not the full story of the Hispanic community, which encompasses a vast and diverse group of people, including Indigenous, Latino, Afro-Latino, and many other identities that span across cultures, countries, and regions; and

**WHEREAS**, as we continue to celebrate and honor the many contributions of nuestra raza, we acknowledge that this is only one chapter in a broader, multifaceted history, and we commit to future proclamations that further highlight the stories of resilience, progress, and the remarkable diversity of our people, reflecting on how far we have come and where we are headed as a community.

#### **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY DENVER CITY COUNCIL:**

**Section 1.** That the Denver City Council does hereby extend recognition and honor to the invaluable contributions of SPMDTU.

**Section 2.** That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and transmit copies to Mr. Ralph Maestas, president of the SPMDTU and concilio 7 member as a token of our deep appreciation and gratitude.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL September 16, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT

