



May 3, 2012

Via Electronic Delivery

Sheriff Dan Staton
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Ste 350
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Sheriff Staton:

United in our efforts to promote justice and dignity for all who live in and visit Multnomah County, we are writing to urge you to release Ricardo Valera from custody immediately.

Ricardo was picked up by law enforcement on May Day while exercising his 1st Amendment rights to free speech and free expression. Right now Ricardo is being held at the Multnomah County Jail, despite having all charges against him dropped. The sole reason for his continued custody in the jail is the decision of the Sheriff's office to honor a hold request from ICE.

Just two short months ago, the Board of County Commissioners stated publicly its great concern for the impact of ICE policies, including the Secure Communities data-sharing program, on public trust and public safety locally.¹ The Resolution recognized the misplacement of local resources for enforcement of federal civil immigration law and the Board committed to "work with the community to advocate for the men, women and children of Multnomah County, whose deportation cases merit the full extent of prosecutorial discretion." After an emotional morning of testimony, including testimony from Ricardo himself,² the Board passed the Resolution without opposition.

We urge you to seize the opportunity to implement the values and promises so strongly conveyed by the Commissioners by immediately releasing Ricardo from custody. Ricardo is a hardworking youth with a strong commitment to making Oregon a better place. Ricardo's case, and all those like it, highlights the damage to families and to our community when localities collaborate with ICE to detain people with no criminal record.

¹ March 1, 2012 Resolution "Requesting Immigration and Customs Enforcement to Exercise Prosecutorial Discretion"

² Ricardo's testimony can be seen at 1:59:30 on the video footage of the 3/1/12 Board meeting.

You may be aware of a September 2011 report by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Task Force on Secure Communities, which revealed the shocking number of deportations of immigrants with no criminal record and their devastating effect on the perception of law enforcement in local communities.³ Last week ICE issued a disappointing response to the criticism,⁴ providing little more than a bleak picture of continued mass deportation of low-level offenders and those with no criminal record at all.

Multnomah County is not the kind of place that mistakes honest and courageous husbands, wives, sons, and daughters for dangerous criminals.

You can do something to help. We ask that you follow the lead of your County Board of Commissioners in prioritizing the health and safety of our community. We ask that you immediately release Ricardo and reunite him with his family.

Sincerely,

The following members of the ACT for Justice and Dignity Network:

American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon

Enlace

Jordan Cunnings

Brenda Ivelisse

Lindsay Jonasson

Oregon Dream Activist

Oregon New Sanctuary Movement

Peter Parks

Portland Central America Solidarity Committee

Portland Jobs with Justice

Portland National Lawyers Guild

Rural Organizing Project

Melissa Sarabia

Nina Spring

VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project

CC (via email):

Chair Jeff Cogen

Commissioner Deborah Kafoury

Commissioner Diane McKeel

Commissioner Judy Shiprack

Commissioner Loretta Smith

³ Department of Homeland Security Advisory Council, Task Force on Secure Communities Findings and Recommendations, September 2011 (<http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/hsac-task-force-on-secure-communities.pdf>)

⁴ Protecting the Homeland, ICE Response to the Task Force on Secure Communities Findings and Recommendations, April 27, 2012 (<http://www.ice.gov/doclib/secure-communities/pdf/hsac-sc-taskforce-report.pdf>)