

FAMILIA LATINA UNIDA
STORIES AND TESTIMONY FROM OUR FAMILIES

FRANCISCA LINO

My name is Francisca Lino I am the mother of 6 U.S. Citizens and 3 U.S. Grandchildren. I support this resolution. My Husband Diego is also a US citizen. We are a family of eleven and I am the only one who is undocumented. 1999 I arrived to the U.S. to work leaving behind two small children. I met and fell in love and married my husband Diego. He had a small child a son from his previous marriage that he was raising alone. My husband Diego adopted my two children and by this time I was pregnant with my daughter Britzy.

Diego sponsored me to adjust my status with a notary Public who submitted all the legal documents. Diego also adopted my 2 children we were reunited and with Britzy we became a family of 6. We were so happy and then we got the news that I was with child again but this time having twins. I received a notice for my appointment for my permanent residency status and was looking forward to the appointment to celebrate that I would get my legal status.

My babies came early and I went to the hospital and they were born premature. They were so small and weak and I was breast feeding them to help them get strong. My appointment for interview to adjust my status and the babies arrived only days apart. I had to leave them in the hospital to attend the interview.

My husband said we would be back quickly but that we couldn't miss the appointment. I confided in God that everything would be fine. When we arrived, I was called in to speak to the agent but they took me to another room and wouldn't let my husband be with me.

They asked me if I had ever been detained and I said yes when I attempted to come to the U.S. I was stopped and then the following day I tried again and I crossed. When the notary asked me this question I gave her the same answer but she checked the box no. Because of this discrepancy I was incarcerated for 28 days.

My twin babies in the hospital and my Britzy and other children at home with my mother in law. My husband got so upset he suffered a heart failure. I was released after a month to care for my babies but was being ordered deported. I had an atty that fought my case to the 7th circuit but lost. I went to my church

and they got me another atty and congressman Gutierrez and then Senator Burris wrote a private bill for me to stay with my children.

Under Obama I was not considered a threat or a priority and because I was a mother and wife of US citizens I was protected. That all ended with this president. I would faithfully every year check in with immigration to see if I posed any threat, and because I didn't I was given a workers permit and waited for permanent relief. Then President Trump was elected and when I went for my periodic routine check in, they didn't want my Pastor to accompany me or my family this was new and strange behavior and I started to panic. My Daughter Britzy started to cry and we were relieved when I was released to my attorney. I was already out of the building when my atty was called for me to return there had been a mistake. I was told to return in a month with a one way ticket and a suitcase with my belongings that did not go over 50lbs because my time was up and I was ordered to leave the country.

My husband and children became very upset and so did I. But my Britzy was so upset that she tried to commit suicide. Where I am from in Mexico there many reports of kidnapping and violence. I would not be safe much less my children who are US citizens. I can't leave them like this so I asked to take sanctuary in my church and they gave it to me. I see my family on the weekends which is not great but much better than being separated. I was ordered deported last August and on the 24th it will be a year. Saturday was my birthday and I was surrounded by my children and my grandchildren.

Periodically a white ICE van will park outside of the church, to remind me of the constant threat of walking outside of the church could lead to permanent separation of my family.

I want to thank the Mayor for suggesting to have the hearing in the church so I wouldn't have to take the risk to come here and share my story. His words of support and of comfort gave me hope. When the mayor hugged me I didn't want to let him go. Our families need this kind of support from all. Please tell him that I wish I could be there but that he knows my story and that he please take my story and the resolution to the council of mayors. Please help us to restore legislatively the protections our families need to stay together.

Ivanka trump said that they shouldn't separate children from their mothers at the border. Ivanka it's happening right here. Our children and family suffer the same

trauma. We suffer right here. Ivanka I am a mother like you. Ivanka as a mother what would you have done in my place.

Doris and Roberto Aguirre

My name is Doris Aguirre I am here with my family my husband Roberto and my two children Bladimir Caballero and Izthel Aguirre.

I left Honduras 16 years ago. I was tired of watching my baby going to sleep hungry and waking up hungry. I passed through 3 borders carrying my baby Bladimir age 2. It was a dangerous and difficult journey but it was one we had to take to survive.

I identify with the families that arrived at the border they are fleeing extreme poverty and violence. Many are being killed and have witnessed neighbors and family members killed raped or tortured. The decision to run and take your children away from danger is a natural human reaction. They should never take the children away from their parents they are only causing more trauma and torture than they have already experienced. They are not the MS 13. They are god's children looking for refuge.

I was fortunate to finally reach the border of Texas and the border patrol saw how thin and tired and hungry we were from the weeks of traveling to finally arrive to the U.S. border and they allowed me to cross and gave me a court date. The paper was in English and I didn't know and I did not appear.

Later I met Roberto who is the love of my life and he took me and made my son his own we were married and later had Izthel. My husband is a US citizen I am undocumented and my son Bladimir is a dreamer. I have not been able to adjust my status and I am still under orders of deportation. My son's future is also unsure because the President has also vowed to end DACA. Returning to Honduras is not an option for us. It would be like running into a burning building.

I have been here for so many years fighting this deportation because my lawyer and my church have done everything to stall the deportation. I'm afraid my time may run out and I will be forced to take sanctuary in my church as did Elvira before and Francisca now who lives in sanctuary. Elvira, Francisca and I pose no threat to

homeland security we pay taxes and are good neighbors and hard workers. The country will be no better off if they rid themselves of the likes of us and destroy our families. We contribute and make America Better. It is clear that Mr. President believes making America great again means that it must be majority and controlled by Whites. These are dangerous times for the Latino mixed status family and the City of Chicago has always has taken a stand. We need you to spark the movement recommend to approve our resolution to keep our families together right here in Chicago and in the country.

MAHALEA VELASCO

Good Morning members of the committee on human relations,

MY NAME IS MAHALEA VELASCO I'M 11 YEARS OLD. I WAS 5 YEARS OLD WHEN MY FATHER WAS DEPORTED 6 YEARS AGO.

MY MOTHER AND MY 4 BROTHERS AND SISTERS WERE ALL BORN HERE IN CHICAGO. WE ARE ALL U.S. CITIZENS.

MY DAD WAS DRIVING HOME FROM WORK WHEN HE WAS PROFILED AND STOPED BY THE POLICE. WITH IN 12 HOURS HE WAS IN DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS. JUST LIKE THAT MY DAD WAS DEPORTED. MY MOM WAS CRYING IN THE KITCHEN AND MY SISTERS WERE HUGGING HER AND I SAID WHAT'S HAPPENING. MOMMY SAID "DADDY'S GONE" I GOT SO SCARED. I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND. I FELT IT THAT NIGHT BECAUSE HE WOULD ALWAYS COME INTO OUR ROOM AFTER WE WERE IN BED TO KISS ME GOOD NIGHT. JUST WRITING THIS MAKES ME RELIVE IT AGAIN AND I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH I HAVE CRIED.

THEY DIDN'T CARE THAT HE HAD A WIFE AND KIDS WAITING FOR DADDY TO COME HOME. THAT HE WAS WHO SUPPORTED US. THEY DON'T CARE THAT MOMMY HAS TO WORK 2 JOBS TO SUPPORT US.

MY FATHER DIDN'T ABANDONED ME HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY ICE AND RACIST POLICE THEN DEPORTED BY THE BROKEN AND UNJUST SYSTEM THAT DIVIDES OUR FAMILIES EVERY DAY.

HE MISSED MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS GRADUATION. I FORGET SOMETIMES HOW HE LOOKS. I DREAM OF HIS HUGS AND KISSES AND THE TIMES WE WENT TO PLAY IN THE PARK AND WHEN HE WOULD TAKE US EVERYWHERE.

I MISS HIM AND WE ARE FIGHTING TO BRING HIM HOME BUT THE FIGHT IS MUCH BIGGER THAN JUST MY DAD.

WE NEED TO DEFEND THE BABIES AND CHILDREN BEING SEPERATED AT THE BORDER AND REUNITE THEM WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

WE NEED TO BRING OUR DEPORTED VETERANS BACK BECAUSE THEY FOUGHT FOR THIS COUNTRY AND THIS FLAG AND ITS NOT FAIR THAT THEY THROW THEM AWAY LIKE GARBADGE. WE NEED TO BRING MIGUEL PEREZ JR. AND THE OTHERS BACK HOME.

WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR ASHLEY WHO DIED IN KUWAIT FOR THIS COUNTRY AND NOW THEY ARE DEPORTING HER FATHER.

WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR THE 2 MILLION DREAMERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR 300,000 WHO HAVE TPS WHO ARE SUPPOSE TO BE DEPORTED TOMORROW.

WE NEED TO FIGHT FOR ALL THE KIDS AND FAMILIES THAT ARE TERRORIZED EVERY DAY BY ICE

THIS PRESIDENT DOESN'T LIKE PEOPLE OF COLOR HE IS AND EVIL RACIST. SEPERATING FAMILIES IS A NAZI TRADITION. SEPERATING FAMILIES IS WHAT WHITE SUPREMIST DID TO THE SLAVES, AND TO THE NATIVE AMERICANS.

DONALD TRUMP IS A NAZI. HE SAID MEXICANS ARE ANIMALS

WELL WE ARE NOT ANIMALS WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS THAT LOVE OUR FAMILIES BUT IF I COULD BE AN ANIMAL I WOULD BE A BLACK PATHER FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE.

THE BIGGEST KILLER HERE IN THE USA AND IN THE WORLD IS NOT CANCER, NOT GUN VIOLENCE, NOT EVEN WAR...

ITS INEQUALITY.....ITS INEQUALITY!!!!!!

THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY IS RIGHT HERE IN THE USA. I WANT THE MAYOR TO DEFEND ME AND MY FAMILY AND ALL OF US. WE ARE FROM CHICAGO, WE WERE BORN HERE. I WANT YOU TO DEFEND ME.. PLEASE HELP ME GET MY DAD BACK. PLEASE STOP THE DEPORTATIONS AND SEPERATION OF OUR FAMILIES. SUPPORT OUR RESOLUTION.

DESIDERIO AND ROSA MEDINA

My name is Desiderio Medina and I am a U.S. Citizen and I married my wife Rosa and we had a son and I was adjusting my wife status when they said that she was unable to return to this country. I was distraught and didn't know what I would do. The life we made here together had been destroyed. I had to work and save and my son and I had to go back and forth to see her. My second child a daughter was born in Mexico. My daughter though born in Mexico is a citizen of the U.S. I couldn't go to Mexico often because it's expensive and my son was here in school. My son suffered without his mother I did all I could but we were a broken family, not by divorce or by death but by a broken system that doesn't recognize us as people or families.

Every month I sent her money to survive and get what she and my baby needed. She noticed when she was going into the bank that there were people inside the bank communicating with the known gang in the area. The Zeta's are a cartel that are known to use and kidnap persons but especially children to extort them for ransom. When my wife left the bank, they followed her and took my baby from her arms and told her if she didn't empty the account and give them the money they would kill her. My wife hysterical pleaded with them not to hurt our baby girl and she went and did what they said. She and my daughter were traumatized and I went to Lincoln Church and Pastora Emma said let's go bring them home. At that time there were 3 families from the church that were in the similar situation and she tried to get them all back but my wife and daughter were the only ones that were able to return. They kept my wife detained for months and I had my baby and she was traumatized without her mother.

We were at the border and the agents said you give your daughter to a family member or we take her into foster care. The agent took her from my wife and gave her to me. My daughter didn't want to come with me and the screaming and the crying of both my baby and my wife broke the hearts of all listening even the border patrol. They said it's our job we are sorry. Those tears and screams haunt us all because it happens every single day. This was under Obama administration which was much more companionate. We have an asylum case. The system is broken... Why does my wife and my family have to go thru this if I'm an American Citizen.

SUJAE VELASCO

Hello everyone, I'm Sujae, you heard our story from my little sister Mahalea and my mom so what I'd like to add is that the church has been our therapy. As well as therapy for hundreds of other families that are faced with separation from deportation.

We share our struggle with others and we take on their struggles. We are a family of families. Our church walks with us as we fight for equality, and Justice.

This dance was choreographed by Tanya Lozano after 3 of the children of the church attempted to commit suicide because of the stress the deportation of their parents had on them. The children were in therapy but were not getting better any time soon. They continue their therapy but the church started a youth support sessions and dance therapy. The youth share their stories, they lobby Congress and they support each other and their families. We believe the youth is not the problem but the solution. We can organize and make the change we need.

This first dance is called children

The second is "they don't really care about us"

The release of stress and the feeling of expression is great and healing. It hasn't brought my father back yet but I know that I won't give up and I have a church that will never give up either. We have faith that he will be back. Every time we stop a deportation, or celebrate a family reunited. We get closer to reuniting our own. Please support our resolution. Enjoy the performance...

Zilagi Velasco

My name is Zilagi and I have to admit after my dad was deported our family suffered so much that I attempted suicide a few times. I now am involved in my church joined Americorp and am working on literacy programs and bringing navigation skills to the immigrant community to detect early and prevent curable diseases. I have purpose assisting my family of families who are fighting their loved ones deportations. One day I know we will be together. Meanwhile we pray god to give my mom and all of us strength to stay together.

FUNES FAMILY

Juan and Yolanda Funes are loyal members of my church and would come every Sunday and pray for their children they left back in Guatemala. They worked hard to send to their family the money to survive. As the violence and chaos in their

country grew their prayers became more and more desperate. On one Sunday Juan and Yolanda reported that their eldest son had been kidnapped and the ransom was \$7,000. They borrowed and with all their savings and donations they sent \$5000. Juan Carlos had spent 2 days with a rag in his mouth with legs and feet tied face down in a dark wooded area was released. He is alive today because of his faith when they would come and tell them he was left to die because his family doesn't think he is worth the ransom he relied on his scripture. Psalm 23

During the time he was gagged and tied vampire bats feed on his head toes and fingers. He would pray as he felt their teeth and while they fed on him. I went to the *Guatemalan* consulate with the family as they were asked to cooperate with the authorities. For you that don't know the Brujos are a cartel and very organized and also are behind the sequesters and murders and many have handpicked politicians. Working with the authorities is risky. This rang true when 2 of the many involved in the case were apprehended and were in court justice proceedings. Retaliation by the brujos came hard on the family and the boys were moved to another safer area while their daughter stayed back with grandma. After they attempted kidnapping of the daughter and rape. We knew that this family would not survive without intervention. Juan and is wife spent 12,000 trying to get them to the US border but each time in Mexico they would get tortured ad turned back and deported. I and a co-pastor Julie Contreras went to get them I crossed the border while sister Julie worked with border patrol and Homeland security so they would understand this family has attorneys and support. We brought proof of credible fear and by organizing the documents we brought all 13 here and they live together now and we pray that they stay together. While I was in Mexico the 6-month-old nephew of Juan did not have a passport as I was doing the paper I missed the new born. Mexico said they wouldn't give him to me. They were going to take him I can't tell you what was going through my mind but I knew I was taking him with me. After 3 hours of a real Mexican stand off they gave him to me. Then they announced I couldn't leave in the vehicle with my driver I used to cross the border. I was kidnapped once in Mexico and survived and knew not to get into any vehicle so again I had to argue and won. The drove us to a nearby church where I prepared 13 to face the border patrol. When I left and was dropped off by the vehicle I was followed and was frightened that they would take my family. We made it. Then they got detained but within a week 12 were released except for Carlos who was sick from the kidnapping still and very thin. He remained 6 months in detention but never

gave up. They are seeking Asylum and case is pending. Asylum cases now are held in detention until they are heard in court to deter anyone from requesting it. It is a sinful and very expensive way to discourage someone in imminent danger to stay and face death.

GUADALUPE GARCIA

My name is Guadalupe Garcia I am in favor of the resolution. I have been living in this country for 26 years and I am the mother of a good citizen. I had 3 jobs to get ahead and establish myself in this country. I have not committed any crime. I try to be a good citizen to give a good example of Mexicans. My Employer had filed for my request thru the labor department I was protected under I 245 but ignorantly I did not request copies for those papers and now I am searching for supporting evidence but after 7 years all records have been destroyed my son who turned 21 applied for me, now I am in limbo I don't know if I will have to leave for 10 years if that is the case I lose everything that I've built with great effort, I lost both my mother and father I could not attend their funeral, therefore have no one out there, I am in the hands of the judges and God.

GUSTAVO AND MARLENE SALMERON

Dear Members of the Chicago City Council Committee of Human Relations my name is Gustavo Salmeron I am a US citizen and a public-school math teacher. I married my wife Marlene and we had 2 children both US citizens as well. My wife Marlene is not a criminal she is an amazing wife and mother. I filed and sponsored an application to adjust her status and she was denied and deported. We were separated for 8 long years. My teacher salary was not enough to support an apartment here and one in Mexico, so I had to take other work opportunities and worked long hours. My son stayed with me and we would go back to Mexico to be with Marlene when I could. We had our second child and because she was an infant had to stay in Mexico with her mother. This was economically, emotionally, difficult. I couldn't find any legal way to bring her and daughter home.

The town where my wife and daughter were living became extremely dangerous as people we know and neighbors were killed. I sent money every month so my wife and daughter could have the basic necessities. One day my wife was

followed and the men tried to kidnap my baby girl. I didn't know where to go and what to do.

I went to the Lincoln United Church and Familia Latina Unida because I had heard that they could help me. They got an attorney and wrote up the case regarding attack and attempted kidnapping of my daughter. They went with me to the border and presented my case at the border my wife was detained for several hours but then was released we came back to Chicago together and we are applying for Asylum. We are extremely worried with the change in criteria under current administration.

Please help us keep our family together.

Elvira Arellano and family

My name is Elvira Arellano I support the resolution...I lived in sanctuary for a year and was deported in 2006 I was arrested at the airport shortly after 9-11. It was hard after 9-11 because we who work and have families were treated as terrorist and we had absolutely nothing to do with that. Since then we have never recuperated. I returned because my son Saul who was born here had to live with me in Mexico because I was mother and father to him. Many children today and then after their parents are deported are put in DCFS and then given to foster homes and adopted or defacto deported to countries that they don't fit in and are

bullied or in Mexico or central America where they are victims of kidnapping for ransom or for human trafficking or for organs. I had to come back because we were threatened for supporting the immigrants who were fleeing from violence and passing through Mexico. For that my life and my family were threatened. I came in the first place because after the devaluation of the peso and the NAFTA many of the families who were farmers couldn't compete with the cheap corn that the US flooded our country with so we had to find other work. I went to the Maquiladoras the companies that this country opened in our country that only paid us less than \$10 a day so I came here. Imagine that corn was our main product what we use to make the tortilla we had to buy it from the US. All the companies closed here to go to Mexico and pay us \$8 dollars a day. So only the corporations made the money while leaving us exploited and here they took union jobs and put those workers unemployed and turned them into exploitation jobs.

My son Saul is in the university and a registered voter and we worked together on a few campaigns and our candidates all won. My 5 year old son and I and his father have applied for asylum.

We are families we are workers and we contribute... we are mixed families and deserve to stay together.

CECILIA GARCIA

I am in favor of the resolution because I don't want any more families and children to go through what we did. I would have never been involved in this struggle I thought I'm a US citizen I'll just apply to adjust for my husband. Wrong it changed long time ago. It doesn't work like that. I applied for my husband. Bill Clinton changed the law making it difficult for us to adjust for our families they have to be in the shadows until they visas are available. He was profiled while driving and the nightmare began and he was deported. Every time he attempts to return for a graduation of our kids or when one of us is sick he gets caught and the charges are worse. Its been 6 years of me working 2 and 3 jobs and DCFS calling me a negligent mother, because my kids broken hearted were depressed and wouldn't go to school. Please help us get our families back.

TESTIMONIES FROM DREAMERS

2. My name is Luis Rafael this is my family we are a mixed status family. My parents are undocumented workers and these are my brothers and sisters they were all born here. This little guy is my son he is 3 years old, he was born here also. I am a dreamer. I'm in favor of the resolution because we deserve to stay together. I can't live without them and they need me.

ESPERANZA PEREZ

My name is Esperanza Perez and I am the mother of green card veteran Miguel Perez Jr. who was deported in March of 2018. My son served two tours of duty in Afghanistan while serving in the army. While he was there he was the victim of an attack and suffered a TBI, traumatic brain injury. He came back from war with this severe injury and also showed signs of PTSD. My husband and I worked to get him the care he needed at the VA but that was at a time when they were extremely disorganized and appointments were more than 6 months to a year a part. My son began to self medicate with drugs and alcohol and unfortunately was arrested and convicted of a non violent drug crime. My son served his prison sentence and it was there where he finally was able to see a doctor and get the combination of medicines he needs to treat his serious medical conditions. While in prison he rehabilitated himself and reformed his life. We did everything we could to fight his deportation but ICE deported him to Mexico and he now lives penniless and without his essential medications. My husband and daughters are all US citizens now. Our family is broken without my son. I want to encourage you to pass this resolution and to work with your constituents to call on Congress to pass legislation that will legalize all of our families and bring our son home.