

June 3, 2014

Dear President Obama,

As advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans and their families – including an estimated 267,000 undocumented LGBT Americans – we write to join the call for you to take swift executive action to suspend mass immigration detention and deportations.

Like so many others, LGBT immigrants continue to be torn from their families and communities by these deportations. LGBT immigrants, many of whom came to the US to escape life-threatening persecution for who they are, are regularly and senselessly being detained for months, or even years, in unsafe conditions. Despite new regulations pursuant to the Prison Rape Elimination Act, Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) has failed to take adequate steps to protect LGBT people from abuse and inhumane isolation in detention centers, and transgender women in particular continue to face harsh and inhumane conditions.

The Obama administration has now deported two million people, and spends far more on immigration detention and deportation than any other law enforcement activity. Instead of increasing public safety, this approach has torn apart families and communities and undermines trust in government at all levels. Instead, we call on you to: (1) suspend these deportations and ICE detainer requests; (2) expand the successful Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to as many people as possible under the law; and (3) revise detention policies to dramatically curtail the use of detention, including ending the detention of vulnerable individuals such as those who are LGBT, pregnant, or have disabilities, and of any person who poses no risk to public safety, and defining mandatory custody to include alternatives to detention. These actions are well within the authority of the Executive Branch.

Immigration enforcement remains a critical issue facing LGBT communities, and we would value the opportunity to meet with your staff to discuss these issues.

Sincerely,

Equality Federation
Family Equality Council
GetEQUAL Action
GSA Network
Human Rights Campaign
Immigration Equality
Lambda Legal
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
Transgender Law Center