

1 [Motion to Support Letter for Valeria Thais Suarez Rojas, CIYJA Organizer from Deportation]

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3 Supplementary Information:

4 Letter of Support (attached)

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Youth Commission
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Department of Homeland Security
Office of Chief Counsel
100 Montgomery Street
Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94104

February 18th, 2020

Dear Office of Chief Counsel,

The San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Department to exercise prosecutorial discretion in the case of Valeria Thais Suarez Rojas, A201-392-691. This is important to the Youth Commission as we work on youth immigration issues and we underscore that the City and County of San Francisco that has been declared a Sanctuary City, which emphasizes and believes in refuge for all people, particularly those who are targeted and marginalized.

The Youth Commission is composed of seventeen youth representing the diverse communities of San Francisco. The Youth Commission, which has a Transformative Justice committee has a longstanding history of advocating for immigrant rights, sanctuary, and liberation. Approving Valeria's prosecutorial discretion would mean helping a young gender non-conforming immigrant live in the country they've started and sustained a life in.

Valeria deserves our utmost support. Valeria is a 23-year-old student graduate and community leader who in January 2020 graduated from the University of California, Berkeley ("UC Berkeley"). Valeria is a valued member of their academic community and the broader San Francisco Bay Area.

Valeria has excelled at one of the country's leading universities. In January 2020, Valeria graduated from UC Berkeley, with a Bachelor's degree in Social Welfare and minor in Education. As a student leader, Valeria mentored youth on campus by participating in Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education (RISE) from 2016 to 2018, where they advocated for education access for first-generation students. Valeria's mentorship supported youth in navigating academia and community engagement programs at the university. Since October 2019, Valeria has been a Fellows Coordinator for the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigration Affairs for the City of San Francisco, where Valeria supports youth in deepening their engagement in civic and community-driven opportunities.

Valeria's contact with immigration authorities on June 6, 2019, at the San Juan Airport in Puerto Rico, should not result in their deportation. Valeria was traveling domestically after celebrating their birthday and upcoming graduation from UC Berkeley. Domestic travel by a student at a leading university should not have resulted in the Department placing Valeria in removal proceedings. We hope that the Department will reconsider.

Valeria's life is here in the United States. Valeria was brought to this country on a visa when they were a minor. Since then Valeria has built deep roots in this country. Their closest family members are here, including their mother and brother who are both U.S. lawful

permanent residents. Here, Valeria dreams of pursuing a Master's in Counseling and mentoring LGBTQ youth who like them have struggled with issues relating to gender and sexual expression. Valeria recently came out as Queer and identifies as gender nonconforming. In Peru, LGBTQ people like Valeria are still persecuted and same-sex relationships are not recognized by law.

Because of Valeria's deep contributions to our communities and the danger Valeria would face in Peru, we respectfully urge you to exercise your authority to terminate Valeria's removal proceedings. Valeria is not someone who the Department should spend its resources trying to deport to a country where their life would be in danger. We hope that Valeria is given the opportunity to continue their aspirations for higher education here in the United States where they will be safe from persecution.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josephine Cureton". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name below it.

Josephine Cureton, Chair
Adopted February 18th, 2020
2019 – 2020 San Francisco Youth Commission