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May 25, 2020

Dear Committee:

Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony. My name is Alma Perez Aguirre, I am from Longmont Colorado. I ask for your support for proposal HB20-1409, which will give CDPHE the responsibility to inspect and report on conditions in immigration detention centers, including GEO where my brother contracted COVID19.

I would very much like this detention center to be regulated not only because of my brother but because I have heard about so many injustices with the immigrants that have to be there.

My brother Oscar Perez Aguirre was transferred to GEO by ICE on Friday, May 15. He had been in the Sterling jail where there was an uncontrolled COVID19 outbreak, and that day he was going to be released from that jail since he had tested negative for COVID19 there. I was outside waiting for him but he never came out. I did not hear from him until Monday the 18th when he called me in the afternoon and told me that he had been moved to GEO and that he had been ill since then with a fever that would not go away. He asked for fever medicine but they told him that they had run out and they never gave him anything. He told me that they were going to quarantine him and that they were probably not going to give me information about his well-being. I was very afraid of what could happen to my brother since he is 58 years old, has hypertension and an enlarged heart. I hired a lawyer that same day and for several days the lawyer was trying to communicate with my brother but they did not allow him to while my brother was in quarantine. A guard said my brother tested positive for COVID19, but ICE later said that was a mistake and that they still had not received their test results. For days they gave the lawyer incorrect information about who his Immigration Officer was, and they lost the application that my attorney's office submitted in person. We were desperate not to know what was going on with Oscar.

Finally Oscar spoke with the lawyer on Thursday, May 21 from the hospital and confirmed that he does have the virus. It was not until that moment that we realized that he had been moved to the hospital and had been here since Tuesday the 19th. It was also when we realized that his COVID19 test was positive because neither GEO nor ICE notified us. I spoke to my brother on the phone on Friday the 22nd and he tells me that he is not well. He cannot walk, he has no strength. We have worried a lot about him because we have not known what is happening. I think that out of basic humanity, Immigration should have told us "he has to go to the hospital." This is a serious disease, you don't play with it. They have me as an emergency contact. There is no excuse why they did not notify us.

Oscar says that the only fear he has, more than COVID, is to return to the GEO prison. He says "if they return me there I will never leave there alive." In the time he was in GEO, he saw a

fellow detainee rolling on the floor in pain and the guards did not even turn around to see him. That is unjust. Everyone has human rights, they deserve fair treatment.

So I ask the committee to vote to pass this legislative proposal. I hope this proposal will cause immigrants to be treated differently and fairly. Thank you for your time, please support HB20-1409.

Original Language below

Miembros del comité, gracias por la oportunidad de compartir mi testimonio. Mi nombre es Alma Perez Aguirre, soy de Longmont Colorado. Les pido su apoyo por la propuesta HB20-1409, que le dará a CDPHE la responsabilidad de inspeccionar y dar reportes sobre las condiciones en centros de detención de inmigrantes, incluido GEO donde mi hermano contrajo COVID19.

A mi me gustaria mucho que regularan este centro de detención no solo por mi hermano sino por que he escuchado tantas injusticias con los inmigrantes que tienen que llegar allí.

Mi hermano Oscar Perez Aguirre fue transferido a GEO por ICE el viernes 15 de Mayo. Él había estado en la cárcel de Sterling donde hay un brote de COVID19 descontrolado, y ese dia lo iban a liberar de esa cárcel ya que había dado negativo en una prueba de COVID19 allí. Yo estaba afuera esperándolo pero nunca salió. No escuche de él hasta el lunes 18 cuando me llamó en la tarde y me dijo que lo habían movido a GEO y que estaba enfermo desde entonces con fiebre que no se le quitaba. El pedia medicina para la fiebre pero le decían que se les había acabado y nunca le dieron nada. Me dijo que lo iban a poner en cuarentena y que probablemente no me iban a dar información de su bienestar. Me dio mucho miedo lo que le podía pasar a mi hermano ya que tiene 58 años, tiene hipertensión y el corazón agrandado. Contrate un abogado ese mismo dia y por varios días él abogado estuvo tratando de comunicarse con mi hermano pero no se lo permitían según porque mi hermano estaba en cuarentena. Un guardia dijo que mi hermano dio positivo por COVID19, pero despues ICE dijo que eso fue un error y que todavía no reciben los resultados de su prueba. Por días le dieron información incorrecta al abogado sobre quien era su Oficial de Inmigracion, y se les perdio la aplicación que sometió la oficina de mi abogado en persona. Estábamos desesperados por no saber lo que estaba pasando con Oscar.

Finalmente Oscar habló con el abogado el jueves 21 de mayo desde el hospital y nos confirmo que si tiene el virus. No fue hasta ese momento que nos dimos cuenta que lo habían movido al hospital desde el martes 19 ni que sí dio positivo su prueba de COVID19 porque ni GEO ni ICE nos avisaron. Yo hablé por teléfono con mi hermano el viernes 22 y me dice que no está bien. El no puede caminar, no tiene fuerzas. Nos hemos preocupados bastante por él porque no hemos sabido lo que está pasando. Pienso que Inmigración por humanidad nos hubiera dicho “tiene que ir al hospital.” Esta es una enfermedad seria, no se juega con eso. Ellos me tienen a mi como contacto de emergencia no hay excusa por que no nos avisaron.

Oscar dice que el único miedo que tiene, más que COVID es regresar a la cárcel de GEO. Dice “si me regresan allí no vuelvo a salir de allí vivo.” En el tiempo que estuvo en GEO, miro un compañero que se revolcaba de dolor y no voltearon ni a verlo. Eso no es justo. Todos tienen derechos por humanidad, merecen un trato justo.

Por eso, le pido al comité que voten para aprobar esta propuesta legislativa. Espero que esta propuesta haga que les den un trato diferente y justo a los inmigrantes. Gracias por su tiempo, por favor apoyen HB20-1409.