

City Council Meeting – public comments

Re: Support for Juan Rodriguez, undocumented Houstonian // 6.6.17, 2pm, City Hall, 2nd Floor

To Mayor Sylvester Turner and esteemed City Council Members,

thank you for this audience and forgive me for the verbose nature of this 3 minute address. I am used to having to give testimony at the state capital and the Texas State Board of Education and in the same fashion of importance, I am here to address you today.

There are a multitude of families and community members being negatively affected by the White House's Executive Order on Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States. –This ill written EO was made to “ensure the public safety of the American People in communities across the United States” Later in the same document it states -“Tens of thousands of removable aliens have been released into communities across the country, solely because their home countries refuse to accept their repatriation. Many aliens who illegally enter the United States and those who overstay or otherwise violate the terms of their visas and present a significant threat to national security and public safety.”

What this order does not mention is anything about protecting those undocumented citizens who are law abiding citizens. Many undocumented citizens do not pose a threat to national security or the public. In fact in several cases here in the Houston area, we have great role models whose only crime is relocating for a better life. Jose Escobar is one example and now we have Juan Rodriguez.

Juan Rodriguez is scheduled to be deported on June 29th. If you do not know anything about this man, that is far to say – he has not actually committed any crimes that would make him infamous. He is a father, a mechanic, a husband and a tax payer. He is the father of three young ladies, two of whom are students at Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston. I am a supporter and teacher to them both. Their situation has already made the front page of the Houston Chronicle and soon will be documented by the New York Times. Let me make this clear – Rodriguez and his family are as American as you or I. He works and pays for two of his kids to attend a private Catholic Jesuit high school. He gives to his community. He is a prime example of what a model private citizen looks like.

I come to you today to ask for your support. I come here to ask for you to protect Juan Rodriguez by whatever means are at your disposal. I know this body was able to protect Jose Escobar, and I know there are many other people who could use the support – and many need it, but today, I implore you to assist this family. Prior to this meeting, I have send each of you a link to the petition being sent around in regards to Mr. Rodriguez's case. Immigration lawyers and advocacy groups are collecting 10,000 signatures in support of Mr. Rodriguez. We are asking INS to reconsider their action and leave Mr. Rodriguez alone. I am asking that you sign the petition and make a statement individually in support of the Rodriguez family, one that goes to your constituents – read the articles in the Houston Chronicle about Mr. Rodriguez and that amazing family. I ask this as a private citizen, as an activist and as an educator.

I fear for families like the Escobars and the Rodriguezs – there are more families out there, who are being negatively affected by both this Executive Order and soon by SB4. Please don't allow any more families be torn apart. Thank you for your time.

Lupe Mendez