

Federal judge rules against three detained, politically active immigrants in bond hearing

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More than 100 people protested outside the John F. Kennedy federal building in Boston in a cold pouring rain Monday while a judge heard the bond cases of three undocumented immigrants from Vermont. The three attended by video from a Dover, New Hampshire, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility, where they have been held since their arrests earlier this month.

Cesar “Alex” Carrillo, 23, was arrested in early March when he arrived at the Costello Courthouse in Burlington, Vermont, to clear charges on a drunken driving arrest. In his absence, the charges were dropped.

Carrillo was first to face the judge early Monday afternoon. While Carrillo’s bond was set for \$21,000, the judge then ruled to revoke the bond because of his arrest on suspicion of DUI, the charge that had been dismissed.

Burlington Free Press reporter Jess Aloe, one of five reporters allowed in the court, tweeted: “Sad scene in the courtroom: Carrillo’s wife and daughter both in tears right now knowing he is not eligible for bond.”

Following Carrillo’s hearing, the judge set bond for Zulily Palacios, 23, and Enrique “Kiké” Balcazar at \$2,500 each. In an immigration bond hearing, a lawyer must first prove that his or her client is not a risk to public safety. Attorney Matt Cameron is representing the three immigrant workers.

The three cases were heard in Boston as Attorney General Jeff Sessions made an unannounced appearance at the White House press briefing Monday afternoon, threatening sanctuary cities to comply with federal immigration detention requests or risk losing billions in federal grant funding. Sanctuary cities are those in which local officials do not volunteer to cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

“Such policies cannot continue,” Sessions warned. “They make our nation less safe by putting dangerous criminals back on our streets.”

All three Vermont immigrants are active in the Migrant Justice group and their supporters insist they have been targeted for their political views and activities. Balcazar and Palacios were arrested by ICE agents as they exited the Migrant Justice office on March 17 in Burlington, Vermont. Neither has a criminal record.

Since becoming involved last year, Palacios has been working to create Migrant Justice women’s groups. She had overstayed her visa by about eight months, but in the past such violations did not generally attract the attention of the US Department of Homeland Security.

Balcazar arrived in Vermont about seven years ago. He worked 70 to 80 hours a week in the state’s dairy industry, earning below minimum wage. According to *Remezcla.com*, “He felt like a prisoner on the farm,” and several years ago he became involved in a campaign to allow undocumented immigrants to get driver’s licenses.

He is also involved in Milk With Dignity, a campaign to get corporations buying dairy products from Vermont to “take responsibility for human rights violations in their supply chains,” a Migrant Justice staffer told *Remezcla.com*. The group is also fighting for fair wages, quality housing, access to bathrooms, and other rights.

Dalida and Dwight from Boston had come to the protest Monday to support the detained workers from Vermont. “I know what’s it’s like to be undocumented,” Dalida told the *World Socialist Web Site*, “Because once I was. I think we need to give them all the support we can.”

“It’s not right the way these workers are treated,”

Dwight said. ‘They’re working and providing a real resource, but then they’re arrested and told to leave.’”

Dylan Lazerow said, “I’m a volunteer organizer with Movimiento Cosecha [Harvest Movement]. We’re organizing a general strike, working towards that with a strike for May 1st. So we’re calling for no work, no school, no buying from the immigrant community on May 1st.

“And so I’m here to support Zully and Kiké and Alex. They are organizers with us. They came to our national assembly about a month ago and took back the work to Vermont. So when we discovered that two of them had been detained leaving an organizer meeting we were shocked and appalled.”

Asked why the three were detained, he said, “I don’t think we’re clear except for their status as undocumented; that’s what I understand. They were detained because they were targeted by ICE for their work organizing farmworkers. Any detention is ugly, but we think that a detention of people working in the community to try to get rid of that fear is particularly dark and poignant.

“I have not fully read into the case, but to my understanding it’s similar to most deportations now. People are being snatched from their communities. In this case, Kiké and Zully and Alex were out as undocumented and organizing undocumented folks. So they targeted them when leaving a meeting and took them in and they’ve been holding them for 10 days.”



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