End Immigration Detention for Vulnerable People

Violations of immigration laws are a civil violation, and those in violation are detained in detention facilities as non-criminals. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for immigrant detention facility, though over 67% of people detained are housed in county prisons, city prisons, and private facilities. Many in detention facilities face poor conditions and have no due process rights. Many undocumented and documented people in detention centers have been in the U.S. for years.

Under the November 2014 Executive Order on immigration, DHS issued a memo emphasizing the discretion DHS enforcement agencies have in detaining individuals. Under this memo, vulnerable communities should be considered for alternatives to detention. Yet, LGBTQI individuals, families, survivors of torture, asylum seekers, pregnant women, victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable people continue to be detained.

NQAPIA is especially concerned with trans* folks who continue to be marginalized and made especially vulnerable in immigration detention centers. Most centers continue to house individuals according to sex, making violence and abuse a daily reality for trans* folks. Some centers see solitary confinement as a way to protect individuals, but in reality, such treatment subjects them to inhumane mental and emotional conditions. Cells designated specifically for trans* folks are still very far in between, forcing individuals to be detained far from their families and support systems. We must stop to the expansion of detention centers, and advocate for and end to detention for vulnerable communities including LGBT communities.

Resources

NQAPIA Info-graph: http://www.nqapia.org/infographics-on-immigration-riseupnqapia/
#Not1More Campaign: Nicoll Hernandez-Polanco

“Nicoll Hernandez-Polanco (A# 089 841 646), a transgender woman from Guatemala, is currently being detained in the all-male wing of ICE’s Florence Service Processing Detention facility in Florence, Arizona. Nicoll came to the United States seeking asylum in October 2014 because she was the target of violent attacks, constant harassment, and discrimination in her country of origin. Unfortunately, at the hands of ICE, Nicoll is now being subjected to the same treatment she seeks protection from.

In her first month in detention, Nicoll was patted down 6-8 times a day by male guards, who Nicoll reported would grope her breasts and buttocks, make offensive sexual comments and gestures, and sometimes pull her hair. In addition to physically harassing Nicoll, ICE staff routinely verbally abuse her. She has been called “stupid,” and “the woman with balls” in front of other detained immigrants.”


Other Resources

- Detention Watch Network
- Dignity Denied: LGBT Immigrants in US Immigration Detention by Center for American Progress
- Why Did the US Lock Up These Women With Men? A Fusion Investigation

Community Conversations

Many Southeast Asians, Pacific Islanders, South Asians, and Asians are targeted and caught in immigration detention facilities that are a part the prison industrial complex. We do not have many stories or data of AAPI communities in immigration detention, but we know there are community members in the system. It is important for our queer AAPI communities to discuss these issues, so we can support all people unfairly detained and uncover stories of our community members in immigration detention facilities.

Start your discussion with stories, cases, videos, and reports from our resources section. Humanize the reality of LGBTQI folks in detention.

Sample Questions

1. If you watch a video or share a story, ask people how they feel with what they saw or heard.
2. Have people been in or heard of those who have been in immigration detention centers? If so, have people share whatever they feel comfortable sharing.
3. Have you heard of the prison industrial complex? What does this term mean to you? Do you agree that it exists? Why or why not?
4. How does immigration detention and/or the prison industrial complex impact your community?
5. What can be done locally to fight the prison industrial complex including immigration detention?


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[www.nqapia.org](http://www.nqapia.org)