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**From:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** FW: TRUTH Forum, Agenda Item 12  
**Attachments:** TRUTH\_Forum\_Item\_No.12\_CRLAF\_public\_comment.pdf

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**From:** Rosemary Gomez <[rgomez@crlaf.org](mailto:rgomez@crlaf.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 12, 2021 3:07 PM  
**To:** BOSComments <[BOSComments@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:BOSComments@fresnocountyca.gov)>  
**Cc:** [iceoutfresno@gmail.com](mailto:iceoutfresno@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** TRUTH Forum, Agenda Item 12

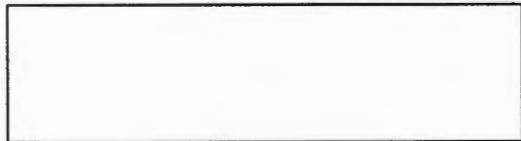
**CAUTION!!! - EXTERNAL EMAIL - THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK**

Dear Fresno County Board of Supervisors:

I live and work in District 3. I am emailing you to submit the attached public comment in place of my presence in person. In my comment, I urge you to order Sheriff Mims to end all entanglement with ICE and to be more transparent with the community.

Sincerely,

**Rosemary Gomez (she, her, hers)**  
Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow  
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
1921 N Gateway Blvd #102 | Fresno, CA 93727  
(559) 878-3348 [rgomez@crlaf.org](mailto:rgomez@crlaf.org) | [www.crlaf.org](http://www.crlaf.org)



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April 12, 2021

# California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

Rosemary Gomez, *Immigration Attorney*  
*On behalf of CRLA Foundation Fresno*  
1921 N. Gateway Blvd., Ste. 102  
Fresno, CA 93727

## **RE: Defund The Fresno County Sheriff's Department and End ICE Transfers**

Dear Fresno County Board of Supervisors:

Amagda Pérez, Esq.  
Executive Director

Mark S. Schacht  
Deputy Director

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Rosa Armendariz  
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### **REGIONAL PROJECTS**

Ceres/Modesto  
--Rural Health Advocacy  
  
Fresno  
--Immigration & Citizenship  
--Sustainable Rural Communities  
  
Oakland  
--California Advocacy for Farm Workers  
--Temporary Foreign Workers Project  
  
Sacramento  
--Education Equity  
--Citizenship & Immigration  
--Labor & Civil Rights Litigation  
--Labor & Employment Law Project  
--Pesticides & Worker Safety Project  
--Rural Housing Project  
--Rural Health Advocacy  
--Special Projects  
--Sustainable Rural Communities  
  
Vista  
--Border & Human Rights Project

My name is Rosemary Gomez and I am an immigration attorney at California Rural Legal Assistance (“CRLA”) Foundation – Fresno. I live and work in District 3. On behalf of CRLA Foundation, I submit this comment to express deep concern with our Sheriff’s Department continued entanglement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and demand accountability from the Board.

CRLA Foundation is a statewide organization with a focus on serving rural, low-income, and largely Latino communities throughout California’s Central and Northern Valleys. Our immigration unit provides comprehensive immigration representation to all undocumented community members regardless of criminal history. We conduct a number of consultations and legal orientations with detained individuals on a monthly basis.

Through these consultations, I have encountered Latino males with low-level offenses who were transferred from Fresno County jail to the custody of ICE. In fact, a majority of the individuals I consult with are in immigration detention *because of* their contacts with the criminal justice system. Many of them are ultimately released on bond by an Immigration Judge because they are not considered a danger to the community. One year after a pandemic, as we continue to struggle as a nation to overcome its catastrophic impacts, confinement of migrants is unjust and inhumane. I am disappointed in our county for contributing to the population of immigration detention facilities even as we see efforts at the national level to “overhaul” our immigration enforcement system.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, it is clear our Fresno County Sheriff cannot be trusted with public safety when she does everything in her power to undermine state law protections for our migrant community. In the past, she has published inmates’ release dates and/or immigrant detainer status on a public portal to facilitate the

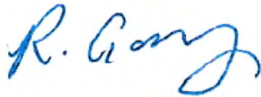
<sup>1</sup> See Michelle Hackman, Wall Street Journal, *Deportations and Arrests of Immigrants in the U.S. Illegally Fall Sharply Under Biden* (April 2021), available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/deportations-and-arrests-of-immigrants-in-the-u-s-illegally-fall-sharply-under-biden-11617544800>.

transfer of a county jail inmate to ICE custody. In recent years, she has even misrepresented the number of people transferred from our local jail to ICE custody.<sup>2</sup> Sheriff Mims is someone who cannot be trusted and transfer data coming from her is unreliable.

Local law enforcement cooperation with immigration erodes public trust in our local institutions and leads to racial profiling of Latinos. Moreover, immigration enforcement and deportations have devastating impacts that extend well beyond the impacted individual and their family. Thus, I urge the Board to (1) take action to halt the Sheriff's Department current practices now (2) defund law enforcement and (3) prioritize investing in the health and wellness of our diverse community.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Rosemary Gomez

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<sup>2</sup> See Yesenia Amaro, Fresno Bee, *Fresno County sheriff 'lied' about ICE cooperation, attorneys say. Here's her response* (August 2020), available at: <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/article244033727.html>.

#12  
4/13/21

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**From:** Priya Murthy <Priya@sirenimmigrantrights.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:36 AM  
**To:** BOSComments  
**Cc:** iceoutoffresno@gmail.com  
**Subject:** TRUTH Forum, Agenda Item 12

**CAUTION!!! - EXTERNAL EMAIL - THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK**

Dear Board of Supervisors,

My name is Priya Murthy and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director at Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN). SIREN's mission is to empower low-income immigrants and refugees in the Central Valley and the Bay Area through immigration legal services, policy advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement. While we serve community members throughout Fresno County, our Central Valley office is located in the city of Fresno (ZIP code: 93703).

We are urging you to order Sheriff Mims to end all entanglement with ICE and to be more transparent with the community. Over the past couple of years, the Sheriff has reported nearly zero to few transfers. Yet, today she is reporting to have voluntarily transferred at least 47 people into ICE custody in 2020. Not only is the dramatic shift in data reporting alarming, but Sheriff Mims chose to transfer our community members in the middle of a deadly pandemic to ICE and into immigration detention centers, where the virus spread like wildfire last summer.

Since the beginning of the pandemic over 3,800 people in the Fresno County jail have tested positive for COVID-19. We know that there have been widespread outbreaks in immigrant detention centers as well and continuing to transfer immigrants into these facilities only furthers the spread of COVID-19. The Sheriff's action is out of step with our values of compassion, humanity, and community.

At a time when thousands of people in our community are being impacted by- unemployment and housing insecurity we call for the Sheriff to halt the voluntary transfers of community members to ICE and for the Board to instead invest in the most vulnerable members of our community.

Sincerely,

Priya Murthy  
Policy and Advocacy Director  
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN)

2904 N. Blackstone Avenue, Suite 202  
Fresno, CA 93703

1415 Koll Circle, Suite 108  
San Jose, CA 95112

#12  
4/13/21

## Hancock, Kelley

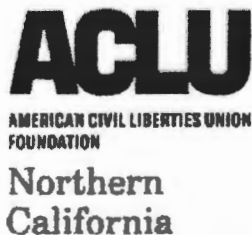
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**From:** Maria Romani <mromani@aclunc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:40 PM  
**To:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** Public Comment - Tuesday April 13, Agenda Item 12  
**Attachments:** 2021.04.12 ACLU Public Comment for Fresno TRUTH Act Forum.pdf

**CAUTION!!! - EXTERNAL EMAIL - THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK**

Attached, please find my public comment for today's meeting.

Thank you,  
Maria



Maria Romani  
Immigrants' Rights Project Attorney\*  
ACLU Foundation of Northern California  
P O. Box 188 Fresno, CA 93707  
Ph: 559.554.2994 | F: 559.468.6071  
Pronouns: she/her/hers  
*\*Not admitted in California; admitted to practice law in New York.*

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Subject: TRUTH Forum, Agenda Item 12

Good morning, my name is Maria Romani and I am a resident of Fresno County. I am also a staff attorney at the ACLU of Northern California.

I'm writing today to ask that this Board issue a policy ending its inhumane, voluntary practice of transferring immigrant community members from Fresno County jails to ICE custody. These are community members who would otherwise be allowed to return to their homes and to their families. The COVID-19 pandemic heightens the cruelty of this practice.

Over the past couple of years, Sheriff Mims has inconsistently reported the numbers of people she has transferred to ICE custody. In 2019, she reported to this forum that she transferred 3 people in 2018, but she reported to the Attorney General's office that she transferred 4 people in 2018. However, when she reported the 2018 data at the forum, she backtracked from her cited number to attempt to argue that her office had not actually facilitated those transfers. Yet, through a Freedom of Information Act request, the Fresno Bee uncovered ICE records showing that her office had transferred at least 102 people to ICE custody that year.

Today, Sheriff Mims is suddenly reporting to have voluntarily transferred at least 47 people into ICE custody in 2020. This is a dramatic shift that should cause this Board to look into the accuracy of the data that was reported over the last several years. However, what is most alarming is that Sheriff Mims chose to transfer our community members to ICE even in the middle of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, which spread like wildfire within immigration detention centers last summer.

This Board has the power to end the unnecessary practice of transferring our community members to ICE during a pandemic. It should exercise that power in order to enable families to stay together and remain safe during these difficult times.

Sincerely,  
Maria Romani