



California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice  
Colaborativo de California de Justicia para Inmigrantes

January 24, 2020

James McHenry  
Director  
Executive Office for Immigration Review  
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Christopher A. Santoro  
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Mary Cheng  
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Executive Office for Immigration Review  
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Falls Church, VA 22041

Christopher Seppanen  
Assistant Chief Immigration Judge for San Francisco (Acting)  
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Detroit Immigration Court  
477 Michigan Avenue, Suite 440  
Detroit, MI 48226

**RE: STAKEHOLDER MEETING REQUEST – ACCESS TO COUNSEL FOR  
RESPONDENTS DETAINED AT THE MESA VERDE FACILITY IN BAKERSFIELD**

Dear Director McHenry, Acting Chief Immigration Judge Santoro, Deputy Chief Immigration Judge Maggard, Deputy Chief Immigration Judge Cheng, and Acting Assistant Chief Immigration Judge Seppanen,

We write to express our alarm that Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) intends to abruptly change the venue of the cases of respondents detained at the Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center in Bakersfield, California to the new Van Nuys Immigration Court as of February 3, 2020. As

detailed below, we implore that the change be halted, at a minimum, to permit stakeholders to provide input and that the impact on the detainees' access to legal services be considered. As such, we request a stakeholder meeting with EOIR before the implementation of any change of venue for respondents detained at Mesa Verde.

We are a coalition of pro bono legal service provider offices that has worked for years to increase access to legal assistance and counsel for individuals on the San Francisco detained dockets, which include individuals detained at Mesa Verde. We have significantly increased pro bono representation capacity on the detained docket in the San Francisco Immigration Court. In partnership with, among others, JDC, Centro Legal de la Raza, Asian Americans Advancing Justice—Asian Law Caucus, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, and the San Francisco Office of the Public Defender, California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ) has secured representation for hundreds of detainees during 2019 alone. In addition, we have worked with the Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) of The Bar Association of San Francisco to successfully increase pro bono coverage on the detained dockets from 2% in 2016 to well over 50% in 2019.

Mesa Verde has been part of the San Francisco Immigration Court jurisdiction since the detention facility opened in 2015, and CCIJ organizations and partner agencies have been working diligently to increase regional capacity to represent individuals detained at the facility since that time. CCIJ partners have plans to continue to serve detainees housed at Mesa Verde in 2020 and beyond. These plans have required significant programmatic development and fundraising to ensure that the detainees have continued access to consultations, pro se assistance, and full scope legal services. Detained individuals already have significant obstacles to accessing counsel and are represented at lower rates than those individuals who are not in detention. As a result, we are troubled about the sudden transfer of cases to the new Court where no such *pro bono* infrastructure exists.

We are extremely concerned about this sudden change, which will significantly impede access to existing legal services for individuals detained at Mesa Verde. We request that EOIR halt implementation of the change. Alternatively, we request that EOIR delay implementation to afford an opportunity for community stakeholders to provide input about the impact on access to existing legal services. We also request a stakeholder meeting with EOIR prior to the implementation of any change of venue for respondents detained at Mesa Verde.

Sincerely,

ACLU of California 39 Drumm Street, San Francisco, CA 94111
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African Advocacy Network 3106 Folsom Street San Francisco, CA 94110
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Alameda County Immigration Legal and Education Partnership 3543 18th St, Box 23 San Francisco, CA 94110
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Alianza Sacramento  
PO Box 5424  
Sacramento, CA 95817

Immigrant Legal Services of the Central Coast  
15 E. Beach St., Suite 202  
Watsonville, CA 95076

Becker & Lee LLP  
1322 Webster Street, Suite 300  
Oakland, CA 94612

California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
2210 K Street, Suite 201  
Sacramento, CA 95816

CARECEN SF  
3101 Mission St., Suite 101  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Catholic Charities East Bay  
433 Jefferson Street  
Oakland, CA 94607

Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative  
516 Villa Ave., Suite 28  
Clovis, CA 93612

Centro Legal de La Raza  
3400 E. 12th Street  
Oakland, CA 94601

Community Justice Alliance  
744 P Street, Suite 315  
Fresno, CA 93721

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto  
1861 Bay Rd.  
East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Contra Costa Public Defender's Office  
800 Ferry Street  
Martinez, CA 94553

<p>Dolores Street Community Services  938 Valencia Street  San Francisco, CA 94110</p>
<p>Higuera Law  649 Mission Street, 5th Floor  San Francisco, CA 94105</p>
<p>Immigrant Advocacy Group  PO Box 1805  El Granada CA 94018</p>
<p>Immigrant Defense Advocates  Sacramento, CA</p>
<p>Immigrant Family Defense Fund  312 Clay Street, Suite 180  Oakland, CA 94607</p>
<p>Immigrant Legal Defense  1322 Webster Street ,Suite 300  Oakland, CA 94612</p>
<p>Immigrant Legal Resource Center  1458 Howard Street  San Francisco, CA 94103</p>
<p>Immigration Task Force  P.O. Box 902  Monterey, CA 93942</p>
<p>Innovation Law Lab  333 SW 5th Ave #200  Portland, OR 97204</p>
<p>Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity  310 8th Street, Suite 310  Oakland, CA 94607</p>
<p>Jewish Family &amp; Community Services East Bay  1855 Olympic Blvd., Ste. 200  Walnut Creek, CA 94596</p>

Justice & Diversity Center of The Bar Association of San Francisco  
301 Battery Street, Floor 3  
San Francisco, CA 94111

Kehilla Community Synagogue  
1300 Grand Ave.  
Piedmont, CA 94610

La Raza Centro Legal  
474 Valencia Street #295  
San Francisco CA 94402

Latinos United for a New America  
1692 Story Rd., Space 225  
San Jose, CA 95122

Law Office of Helen Lawrence  
436 14th Street, Suite 801  
Oakland, CA 94612

NorCal Resist  
2121 Broadway  
Sacramento, CA 95818-8331

Office of Berkeley Mayor, Jesse Arreguin  
2180 Milvia St.  
Berkeley, CA 94704

Open Immigration Legal Services  
436 14th Street  
Oakland, CA 94612

Pajaro Valley Rapid Response  
Pajaro Valley, CA

Pangea Legal Services  
350 Sansome Street, Suite 650  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Rapid Response Network in Santa Clara County  
1381 S 1st Street  
San Jose, CA 95110

<p>San Francisco Immigrant Legal &amp; Education Network  938 Valencia Street  San Francisco, CA 94110</p>
<p>San Joaquin College of Law- New American Legal Clinic  901 5th Street  Clovis, CA 93612</p>
<p>Services, Immigrant Rights &amp; Education Network (SIREN)  1415 Koll Circle, Suite 108  San Jose CA 95112</p>
<p>SF Public Defender's Office  555 7th St.  San Francisco, CA 94103</p>
<p>Stand Together Contra Costa  3811 Bissell Avenue  Richmond, CA</p>
<p>STEP UP! Sacramento  P.O.Box 246914  Sacramento, CA 95824</p>
<p>UFW Foundation  238 18th Street, Suite 10  Bakersfield, CA 93301</p>
<p>University of San Francisco Immigration &amp; Deportation Defense Clinic  2199 Fulton Street  San Francisco, CA 94117</p>
<p>USF Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic  2199 Fulton Street  San Francisco, CA 94117</p>
<p>VIDAS Legal Services  576 B Street Suite 1C  Santa Rosa, CA 95401</p>



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