



May 30, 2018

Thomas D. Homan
Deputy Director, Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Deputy Director Homan,

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign's more than 3 million members and supporters nationwide, I write to express our deep concerns regarding the recent death of Roxsana Hernandez, a transgender asylum seeker who died while in ICE custody. Ms. Hernandez was one of many LGBTQ asylum seekers in the migrant caravan organized by Pueblo Sin Fronteras that arrived at the border this month. As the nation's largest civil rights organization working to promote equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people, we understand that too often violence, abuse, and intimidation erode access to the American dream – especially for those in our community who are most vulnerable. Ms. Hernandez's death raises serious questions regarding the treatment she received while in ICE custody, and we expect ICE to provide answers to those questions.

Ms. Hernandez reached the United States border on May 9, 2018, seeking asylum after fleeing Honduras due to the violence and discrimination she experienced based on her gender identity. She was held for five days by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) before being processed into the United States and into ICE custody in San Diego. She was transferred again to another facility three days later on May 16 before her admission to a nearby hospital on May 17. She passed away on May 25. It is unclear what medical care was made available to her when she entered the United States and what role the conditions of her initial detention while in CBP custody played in the worsening of her illness.

Ms. Hernandez was unique, but her story is not. LGBTQ individuals are among those most vulnerable to abuse in confinement. According to information provided by the Department in response to a request by Rep. Kathleen Rice, LGBTQ immigrants are detained twice as long as other immigrants and also face lengthy stays in solitary confinement despite ICE regulations that

stipulate its use as a last resort. ICE also reported to Representative Rice that LGBTQ people accounted for only .14 percent of the people detained by ICE in 2017, but made up 12 percent of reported sexual assault and abuse cases.

We urge DHS to fully investigate the circumstances surrounding Ms. Hernandez's death and to take all steps necessary to ensure that future asylum seekers receive the humane, necessary treatment our laws require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chad Griffin
President