

End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: Domestic violence survivor threatened by ICE, End Abuse and RISE call on agency to stop the intimidation immediately

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Representatives of End Domestic Abuse WI, the statewide coalition representing domestic violence shelters across Wisconsin, and RISE Law Center, a legal aid office for immigrant and undocumented survivors of violence, expressed outrage at recent actions taken by ICE representatives against María Portugal, a survivor of domestic violence who has lived in Wisconsin for over 20 years. Directors from the two organizations emphasized the appalling nature of ICE's use of threats of deportation against a victim of domestic violence in order to locate her abuser, a man with whom she has had no contact in over a year.

"A survivor of domestic violence being threatened by ICE with deportation and separation from her daughter in order to locate her abuser is one of the most egregious examples of re-traumatizing and cruel enforcement tactics that we have ever seen in this state," said Patti Seger, Executive Director of End Domestic Abuse WI. "The fact that ICE is using fear, intimidation and threats of family separation against undocumented families is appalling in its own right, but it is truly hard to put into words just how disturbing it is to see these tactics used against a victim of domestic violence because of the actions of her abuser. ICE's use of threats against

this victim not only blame her for the abuse she experienced, but could threaten her safety by forcing her into contact with her abusive husband.”

The two organizations are supporting their allies at Voces de la Frontera by calling on ICE Regional Director Ricardo Wong to meet with a delegation of families threatened by ICE, and to clearly and publicly state that ICE will immediately stop threatening María with detention and separation from her daughter.

“María Portugal has had a pending U-Visa application for over three years, so there is absolutely no excuse for ICE to target her with threats to locate her abuser” said Grisel Santiago-Rivera, Executive Director of RISE Law Center. “While María is not one of our clients, we help survivors process U-Visas regularly at our organization to protect them from deportation while they work with law enforcement to hold violent offenders accountable. The idea that ICE would punish a survivor for bravely stepping forward and working with law enforcement by threatening her with deportation is inhumane and absurd. This injustice must stop immediately and this survivor must receive assurance that she will not be targeted for deportation because of the actions of her estranged husband.”

Members of the media are encouraged to attend a press conference regarding the case at 5pm at this evening at Madison Christian Community, located at **7118 Old Sauk Rd, Madison, WI 53717**. Speakers at the event will include María Portugal and other families under threat of separation by ICE, as well as representatives of Voces de la Frontera, Dane Sanctuary Coalition, Latino Consortium for Action and others.