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Kaya: Filipino Americans for Progress Calls for an End to Inhumane Policies in Our Borders Highlighted by the Detention of Journalist-Activist Jose Antonio Vargas

July 16, 2014 | Press Release

Washington, D.C. – Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, filmmaker and immigration rights activist Jose Antonio Vargas was detained in McAllen-Miller International Airport yesterday after attempting to board a flight to Los Angeles. He traveled to the border area in Texas to document the ongoing humanitarian crisis unfolding in our country's southern border as tens of thousands of minors flee escalating violence in their home countries in Central America. We believe that his detention highlights the daily struggle undocumented immigrants go through in America and the need for a comprehensive immigration reform that would provide a pathway to legal status for the millions of immigrants placed in limbo by our broken system.

Jose Antonio, along with a number of immigration rights activist and fellow volunteers, traveled to McAllen, Texas to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees currently in limbo in our country's southern border as well as to document the crisis unfolding brought about by the inability of our government to respond to this problem effectively. However, upon arriving at McAllen-Miller International Airport, he was detained at the airport and was not allowed to make it across security. As of today, Jose Antonio has been released by Border Patrol with a notice to appear before an immigration judge.

Sadly, what happened to Jose Antonio is an experience that is all too common among undocumented immigrants. On a daily basis, countless immigrants—documented or otherwise—are subjected to being treated like common criminals, often being forced to unlawful searches and indefinite detentions. The conditions that immigrants are subjected to in lawless, constitution-free border zones are degrading and we as Americans must call on our government to implement humane policies concerning the treatment of immigrant in borders and international entry points. Kaya stands with Jose Antonio and other victims of these inhumane policies and calls for these rules to end.

Finally, Jose Antonio's detention emphasizes the need for a comprehensive immigration reform to fix the dire issues plaguing our country's immigration system. Jose Antonio and the 12 million Americans like him deserve better treatment from our government. We demand that members of Congress stop the political bickering and pass a comprehensive immigration reform that provides undocumented immigrants already in the country a pathway to legal status; humane treatment for immigrants in border areas and international entry points; and an immigration process that does not place undue burden on the applicants.

The current influx of minors from Central America to our borders has reached emergency capacity. In addition, Jose Antonio's detention underlines how broken and ineffective our immigration system has become. Especially with the situation at hand, it is more important now than ever before to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

ESTABLISHED IN 2009, KAYA'S MISSION IS TO MOBILIZE THE FILIPINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO INCREASE OUR ELECTORAL POWER, ADVOCATE POLITICS THAT AFFECT OUR COMMUNITY AND DEVELOP LEADERS TO REPRESENT US AT EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT.