

March 10, 2023

## RE: Pardon Support Letter for Carlos Saucedo

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for Carlos Saucedo's pardon application on behalf of the Center for Immigration Law and Policy (CILP) at UCLA School of Law. Founded in 2020, CILP generates innovative ideas at the intersection of immigration scholarship and practice; serves as a hub for transforming those ideas into meaningful changes in immigration policy at the local, state, and national level; and empowers students with unique opportunities for experiential learning through work with academics, practitioners, policymakers, and activists. Carlos significantly contributed to CILP's efforts this spring as a featured panelist at our landmark event: "Building Power from Within: A Conversation with Detained and Deported Organizers." Carlos's contributions left our CILP team impressed with his wisdom and generosity of spirit, and confident that he deserves every opportunity to return to his life and family here in the United States.

Carlos's participation in our "Building Power from Within" event was facilitated by the event's co-sponsors, UCLA's Law Students for Immigrant Justice and the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice. I met Carlos at our first joint planning meeting in January 2023. In that conversation, Carlos stood out as thoughtful and articulate. He shared how he first began organizing in immigration detention to secure shoes for people going to court. He explained the challenges of organizing from within and his pride in the role he played in improving conditions for others in detention, even as he himself was ultimately deported. It was clear that his willingness and ability to share of his experiences was going to make this event a special one.

On February 22, 2023, Carlos joined three co-panelists and a moderator to present to an audience of over 130 people on Zoom and in-person at UCLA School of Law. He spoke of his time in immigration detention, his organizing efforts, the challenges he faced and the joy of organizing victories. I share two moving passages from Carlos' testimony here to give a small flavor of the honesty and generosity with which he shared of his experience:

*Reflecting on an organizing victory:* "They used to tell me anything you do won't mean nothing...On the day that I got the news that the contract had come to an end, it was a huge victory. I always told one of the community members, **even if I don't experience the blessing, I hope somebody else gets to experience the blessing.**"

*Giving advice to young attorneys and law students: “**Everybody deserves an opportunity, at least, to be heard.** You just never know.”*

Carlos’s reflections were later shared with the over 300 people who registered for the event. Based on the feedback from attendees and registrants, I have no doubt that Carlos’ words that day, along with those of his co-panelists, inspired listeners to thought and action on behalf of people incarcerated by immigration authorities.

A gubernatorial pardon will both recognize Carlos’ contributions and rehabilitation, as well as afford him the safety he, like all people regardless of criminal history, deserves to live free from the threat of torture. Carlos’ words and deeds make us at CILP confident that he has journeyed far from the past serious harm he caused as a teenager. After 22 years in prison, the parole board found the same. Moreover, following his release from prison and deportation, the Executive Office for Immigration Review determined that Carlos is entitled to protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT). Yet, absent a gubernatorial pardon, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) refuses to allow him to return to safety in the United States. A pardon will change that: strengthening his argument for return based on his CAT grant as well as opening up a new legal pathway, in the form of a motion to reopen and terminate his case in immigration court, that would automatically restore Carlos’s status as a lawful permanent resident.

Carlos’s case gives the Governor an opportunity to stand squarely in support of an individual who has turned his life around and inspired others with his words and actions. It is likewise a chance for California to take concrete action in support of the state’s immigrant community: where someone has overcome tremendous obstacles and won hard-fought relief from removal, they should be able to come home.

We ask that you grant Carlos’s pardon application. CILP looks forward to welcoming Carlos back to Los Angeles, where we hope to continue to have opportunities to work with him to inspire our law students and community. If we can provide any additional information, please feel free to contact us at [inlender@law.ucla.edu](mailto:inlender@law.ucla.edu) or [\(310\) 206-5298](tel:(310)206-5298).

Sincerely,



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