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## **LGBT and immigrant youth unite for White House action**

Apr. 22, 2014

**LGBT and immigrant youth unite to demand immediate release of GSA alum Yordy Cancino and all youth in ICE detention**

*3 national organizations to deliver petition to the White House on Thursday while youth rally outside ICE office in Los Angeles*

[DC event](#) <sup>[1]</sup> at 9:30 EST in front of White House facing Lafayette Square

[LA even](#) <sup>[2]</sup> at 4pm PST in front of ICE building at 300 N. Los Angeles St



April

22, 2014 -- Immigrant and LGBT youth activists from the Immigrant Youth Coalition, Gay-Straight Alliance Network, and the National Queer and Trans Latin@ Alliance will join together for two actions on Thursday, April 24, supporting the release of undocumented LGBTQ youth in ICE detention.

Over 1000 people have already rallied behind GSA Network board member Mario Vasquez's petition to President Obama demanding GSA alum Yordy Cancino and all youth in detention be allowed to return home. On Thursday, Mario will travel to D.C. to deliver his petition to the White House. That afternoon, students will rally outside of the federal ICE building in Los Angeles to deliver the petition there as well. Supporters can sign the petition here:

<http://unite.gsanetwork.org/p/yordy> <sup>[3]</sup>.

*Yordy Cancino*

“As a GSA leader who migrated to the United States at the age of three, I am far too familiar with the injustice and struggles of queer undocumented youth and their families,” said Mario Vasquez, a Gay-Straight Alliance Network board member and former GSA president from California’s Antelope Valley. “Youth in GSAs work hard to foster a community of acceptance and respect, where everyone, undocumented or not, LGBTQ or not, can feel safe. That’s what Yordy did as a GSA president in Los Angeles, and that’s what GSA youth and alumni across the country are doing with this petition to President Obama. We cannot and will not give up on any of our members.”

Yordy, who has lived in the United States since he was a child, is one of many undocumented youth leading GSA clubs and making schools safer across the country.

Added Ronnie Veliz, an organizer with the National Queer and Trans Latin@ Alliance and Immigrant Youth Coalition: "Yordy is a young queer person of color who proudly served in the city of Los Angeles as the Gay-Straight Alliance president in his high school and graduated as salutatorian. Yordy could continue building his great destiny in LA, but for seven weeks now, ICE has not let him come back home. Yordy is living proof that our immigration system is in dire need of healing and change. I stand with Yordy because as a gay Latino immigrant who arrived at the age of 17 and has contributed daily to California ever since, I believe that immigration policies must improve the lives of millions of men, women, and children, not traumatize us with incarceration, deportation proceedings, and family separation."

After graduating salutatorian from his Los Angeles high school and being accepted to his dream university, Yordy was unable to afford the \$54,000 a year needed to attend. He felt like he had no choice but to go to Mexico, where he has since faced violence and cruelty for being gay. Hoping to return home and escape homophobic violence, Yordy took the courageous step of placing himself into immigration custody and asking for humanitarian parole and asylum. He faced a judge and potential deportation on GLSEN's Day of Silence, but, following calls from GSA and immigrant activists, ICE has delayed action on Yordy's case and kept him and several other LGBTQ youth in detention in San Diego.

Sign the petition to bring Yordy all LGBTQ immigrants in ICE detention home:

<http://bit.ly/freeyordy> <sup>[4]</sup>

Learn more about and join the rally in Los Angeles:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/261689487344506/> <sup>[2]</sup>

Watch a video of Yordy: <http://youtu.be/jwMZFmfHSwQ> <sup>[5]</sup>

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About Bring Them Home: From March 10 - 18, several groups of immigrant youth or DREAMers and families presented themselves at the Otay Mesa border crossing in an extraordinary family reunification effort and sought asylum or humanitarian parole. These youth and families had previously lived in the United States, where they worked, studied, raised children, and contributed to the community in numerous other ways. However, they were either deported due to harsh federal programs or forced to self-deport due to conditions created by anti-immigrant policies such as Arizona's SB 1070, which made life unlivable. Separated from family, and faced with violence and persecution in Mexico, these families have now courageously placed themselves into immigration custody and asked for permission to return home.

About GSA Network: Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network) is a national youth leadership organization that empowers youth activists to fight homophobia and transphobia in schools by training student leaders and supporting student-led Gay-Straight Alliance clubs. GSA Network operates the GSA Network of California and the National Association of GSA Networks, which unites 39 statewide networks of GSA clubs. [www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org) <sup>[6]</sup>

Press Release

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**Source URL:** <http://gsanetwork.org/news/White-House-Action-immigration>

#### **Links**

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/events/488545687911639/>

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/events/261689487344506/>

[3] <http://unite.gsanetwork.org/p/yordy>

[4] <http://bit.ly/freeyordy>

[5] <http://youtu.be/jwMZFmfHSwQ>

[6] <http://gsanetwork.org/>