TEXAS JAIL PROJECT

www.texasjailproject.org Listening, informing, and advocating for people in county jails.

NEWS RELEASE

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Texas Jail Project testifies to Congress in first hearing about harmful local impacts of 287(g)

Washington, DC: Dalila Reynoso, Smith County resident, and Texas Jail Project staff member, provided testimony to congress this morning in an emotionally charged Shadow Hearing organized by Rep. Ramirez (D-Illinois) and Rep. Garcia (D-TX) about the impacts of 287(g) Task Force model enforcement in Texas. Ms. Reynoso offered oral and written testimony alongside a panel of advocates from across the country.

The full written testimony and handouts provided to congress are available on our website here.

Ms. Reynoso explained that Smith County has become one of the leading examples of how local law enforcement and ICE have merged into one indistinguishable force through the expansion of the 287(g) program and its Task Force Model. She shared stories of community members who were arrested under the Task Force Model in Smith County and separated from their families.

"We are witnessing constitutional protections erode in real time, due process weakened and entire communities targeted based simply on their perceived race and ethnicity," said Ms. Reynoso in her testimony to Congress members.

In 2025, Texas passed Senate Bill 8, effectively mandating sheriffs across the state to partner with ICE. *"The law was sold to communities and local law enforcement as a tool that would only target people with criminal backgrounds. But what we've seen is blatant racial profiling leading to traffic stops and low-level infractions that have turned into pipelines to detention and deportation.* ***Even passengers in traffic stops have not been spared, as evidenced by Dee's story.*** *We are witnessing constitutional protections erode in real time, due process weakened and* ***entire communities targeted based simply on their perceived race and ethnicity."***

*"**What is most alarming is how blurred the lines have become between local police, sheriffs, and federal immigration agents.** Families no longer know whether a routine interaction with local law enforcement could end with a loved one disappearing into ICE detention,"* said Ms.Reynoso.

“Communities are frozen with fear - they are afraid to go to work, to school, to doctor’s appointments, to church,” Ms. Reynoso testified. *“Trust in local law enforcement has completely eroded because people know they could be picked up and torn away from their families at any time, simply because someone in uniform “believes” they may be undocumented.”*

Texas Jail Project monitors conditions of confinement in the 244 county jails across Texas and advocates on behalf of the more than 76,000 people held daily in these facilities, over 75 percent of whom are pretrial detainees. Our work additionally focuses on cash bail, the criminalization of mental illness and developmental disabilities, deaths in custody, and the use of county jails for immigration enforcement. Our vision is to replace punitive systems with communities of care.

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