

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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LABOR RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND ADELANTE BOARD MEMBER RETURNS HOME AFTER NEARLY ONE MONTH IN ICE DETENTION

BIRMINGHAM, AL – In the early hours of the morning labor rights activist and member of the Adelante Alabama Worker Center Board of Directors, Marcos Baltazar, and his son Juan, returned to their Alabama home after spending nearly one month in various ICE detention facilities.

On August 22, 2019, the pair was detained during a routine check-in at the Homewood ICE office, despite their compliance with ICE’s requests and lack of criminal record. The Baltazar pair would go on to spend time in both Etowah County Detention Center in Gadsden, AL and LaSalle Detention Center in Jena, LA. Both facilities have been called out by human rights groups for their inhumane treatment of detainees.

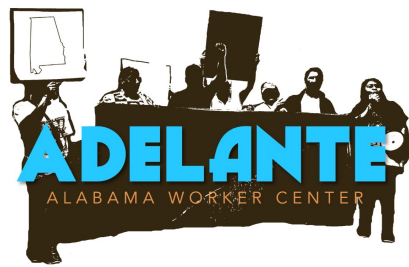
Three years ago, Marcos migrated to the U.S. after his wife gave birth to stillborn twins and died in the following weeks. The two were also fleeing the dangerous conditions and mounting poverty in their home country of Guatemala. A victim of wage theft, Marcos came to Adelante seeking help and was able to secure a victory through organizing and litigation. He has since remained an advocate for his community and a dedicated member of Adelante. In April of this year, Marcos was elected to serve on Adelante’s Board of Directors.

Organizations and individuals across the nation came together to support Marcos and Juan. Adelante was able to raise more than \$16,000 in order to pay their bonds and provide financial support to their family. The group also garnered more than 1,800 signatures for a petition calling on ICE to release the pair and prompting Congressional representatives to take action. “What we saw, instead was incredible community resilience,” states Julia Calderón, President of Adelante’s Board of Directors. “We saw how powerful our communities are when threatened and we made a clear statement to ICE that no matter how much they try to terrorize us, we will not back down.”

Upon their arrival, Marcos and Juan were greeted by a smiling crowd of over 30 community members holding signs that read “Welcome Home Marcos and Juan”. When asked how it felt to reclaim his freedom, Marcos Baltazar responded by saying, “I’m overwhelmed and happy. Thank you to everyone who supported me.”

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Adelante is a nonprofit organization that unites low-wage immigrant workers and their families in the Birmingham area to defend our rights, promote our dignity, and pursue justice for all. To learn more and get involved visit www.adelantealabama.org



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