

Stop the Adelanto Detention Facility

IMMIGRATION EQUALITY

In many countries, it is fundamentally unsafe to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). Often, when LGBT people seek safety in the U.S., they are placed in immigration detention facilities where they are mistreated and abused. **For vulnerable LGBT asylum seekers, the most humane, cost-effective, and common-sense solution is an alternative to detention program.** Participants in alternative to detention programs have been shown to attend court hearings 99% of the time.¹

Instead, the federal government is reportedly opening a segregated, corporation-run unit for transgender women in Adelanto, Southern California. The rural town is a four-hour roundtrip from Los Angeles, where trans women would be isolated from their legal counsel and their community. **Tell Homeland Security not to open the Adelanto transgender unit.**



Far from counsel

Many attorneys in Southern California who specialize in LGBT asylum cases are based in Los Angeles, which is a four-hour round trip from Adelanto. Isolating transgender women so far from counsel would make it almost impossible for them to find a lawyer.

This would be a disaster for the LGBT community. Access to counsel is essential for detained people, who are 6 times more likely to be granted asylum when they have a lawyer.²



Far from support and services

Adelanto has no LGBT community support, healthcare, or social services. Sending transgender women to Adelanto isolates them in a region ill-equipped to meet their basic needs. Separating asylum seekers from the people they know also prevents them from presenting witnesses essential to their legal claims. At the same time, Adelanto is notorious for denying necessary medical treatment to people in detention.³ In fact, the Office of Detention Oversight has noted “egregious errors” in medical care. Putting Adelanto in charge of transition-related healthcare is a mistake.

Sexual assault of transgender women in detention

1 out of 5 victims of sexual assault in detention are transgender women.⁴



Sexual assault of immigrants detained at Adelanto

Adelanto's documented failure to prevent or address sexual assault puts transgender women at risk. A July 2014 government investigation⁵ found that Adelanto's sexual assault case files were missing essential information, including basic details such as the names of victims and assailants, details of the crime, when the incident happened, and who received the report. Adelanto also failed to inform victims about prohibitions against retaliation and about their right to receive treatment and counseling. Transgender women should not be sent to this facility.

Failure to keep women safe

Adelanto has been a men-only facility since it opened, and only started housing a handful of women in July 2015. The corporation that runs it, the GEO Group, has a track record of providing deficient care for women. At the corporation's only other California-based immigration detention facility (Bakersfield), a pregnant woman tripped and miscarried after she was shackled in violation of federal guidelines.⁶ The government should never place vulnerable trans women in an isolated facility run by a private corporation.

Sources:

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