



5 LGBTQ Immigrant Rights Protesters Arrested After Shutting Down Intersection in Santa Ana

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Activists in symbolic cage before arrest

Marilynn Montaña / OC Weekly

Calling on Santa Ana to end its jail contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), trans and queer immigrant activists shut down an intersection in the city yesterday morning. A symbolic cage set up on Civic Center Drive and Boyd Way housed those who staged civil disobedience as part of the action. After an hour-and-a-half, SanTAna police gave a dispersal order. The majority of the

activists took to the sidewalks of the intersection chanting "Liberation Not Deportation" and other messages of support as police took the five cage activists into custody.

Organized by FAMILIA: Trans Queer Liberation Movement and DeColores Queer Orange County, the protest comes a few days after [Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez's apparent 'Come to Jesus' moment](#) on President Barack Obama's deportations. The action took the Deporter-in-Chief to task while also calling attention to the mistreatment of trans and queer people in immigrant detention facilities.

"Authorities might claim it is safer for our marginalized population to be locked in LGBTQ pods inside detention centers," said Ronnie Veliz prior to his arrest, "but we know that is not the case."

[Broadcast live streaming video on Ustream](#)

According to SanTana police spokesman Cpl. Anthony Bertagna, authorities booked Veliz, Ramiro Alexis Gonzalez, Isaias Noycola, Steve Zamarripa and Laura Kanter on suspicion of failure to disperse, unlawful assembly, and impeding the roadway. Four of the five were detained as designated by California penal code by their given sex though one identified as a translatina. According to Bertagna, they were kept at a separate "vulnerable housing section" in the jail. All five are now out on bail.

As reported first by the *Weekly*, Santa Ana city officials are currently [looking to mend, not end, their contract with ICE](#) dating back to 2006. City Manager Dave Cavazos and newly appointed Police Chief Carlos Rojas flew to Washington D.C. to meet with ICE officials and ask that bed space rentals be boosted from \$82 to \$110 per day. Yesterday morning's spirited protest took place outside the police department headquarters and city jail. Rainbow flags with pro-immigrant messages scrawled on them waved defiantly.

Laura Kanter, a Youth Services Director for The Center OC and Irvine resident, participated in the

civil disobedience action, being one of the five hauled away by police.

"We came together to fight for marriage and now are leaving our immigrant brothers and sisters behind, and by doing so, are contributing to the same systems of power that oppress us all," she said in a statement. "The progress of the LGBT struggle for equality, including marriage, is meaningless until every person is seen as fully human and treated with dignity and respect."

After the arrests, activists remaining at the intersection chanted "We'll be back!"

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