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Contact: [press@americanfamiliesunited.org](mailto:press@americanfamiliesunited.org)

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **“I was not coming home without him.” AFU Member Angela Della Valle Reunited with Husband Carlos, Surrounded by Family and Community**

*After nearly nine months in ICE detention, Carlos Della Valle was released to his wife, Angela, and son Alessandro yesterday. Today, they spoke at a virtual press conference alongside family members, local leaders, and leaders from AFU and ABIC.*

Carlos Della Valle, the husband of U.S. citizen Angela Della Valle, was released from ICE detention in rural Louisiana yesterday after sustained advocacy by a broad community of supporters that included faith leaders, business leaders, and a bipartisan group of allies in Congress who [joined Angela on Capitol Hill](#) less than a week ago to call for Carlos's release. Today at a press conference hosted by American Families United (AFU) and the American Business Immigration Coalition (ABIC), the Della Valles spoke to the public for the first time since Carlos's release.

**Marielena Hincapié**, law fellow at Cornell University, opened the press conference: “We're here to celebrate Carlos's freedom after nine months of prolonged ICE detention in deplorable and unhealthy conditions. It takes a village to bring justice to people's lives and to address injustices in the world. At a time in our country where immigration is being used to undermine democracy, this is a moment of light, a moment of hope that tells us when we come together, and when love is at the core of what we do, we can make anything happen.”

**Ashley DeAzevedo**, Executive Director of [American Families United](#) (AFU), said, “There are 1.4 million American families—just like Angela and Carlos—living with this fear right now, U.S. citizens and their loved ones in our neighborhoods, our pews, our workplaces. And most Americans have no idea.” AFU represents U.S. citizens whose spouses are, or could be, facing deportation because they have no pathway to legal status. “Today is proof of what is possible when the community shows up. Carlos spent 258 days in detention. And for 258 days, his wife Angela stood by him with a strength that took our breath away. We will keep fighting until every American family separated by this broken system gets to say the same.”

**Michael Deheeger**, Campaign Director for the [American Business Immigration Coalition](#), said that Carlos “reflects the vital contributions of the 1.3 million Latinos who call Pennsylvania home, a group that now accounts for over 50% of the state's population growth, part of a nationwide Latino GDP that has reached an unprecedented \$4.4 trillion. Senator McCormick's willingness to listen to Angela's story demonstrates a profound understanding of the link between family unity, personal character, and Pennsylvania's prosperity.”

**Angela Della Valle**, who celebrates her 24th wedding anniversary with Carlos in May, said: “This is a love story. It is a love story of our family, our neighbors, our friends, and my students. Above all, it is about belief—belief in family, in each other, in community.” Angela spent the past 258 days traveling across the country to wherever Carlos was being held, visiting him in detention whenever she could, and connecting with other citizens with spouses in detention. She emphasized the importance of being proactive: “We are not victims. We are active participants. Democracy is

something that is living, and you have to give life to it.” Although she has been reunited with Carlos, Angela said the fight is not over. “We have a lot of work to do for all kinds of families, particularly mixed-status families, because all families deserve to be together.”

**Carlos Della Valle** appeared on camera next to Angela. When he first found out he was being released, he said he “froze.” “The officer said, ‘Pack your stuff. You’re leaving,’ and I just couldn’t react. The other guys around me understood before I did. The third time she said it, she finally said, ‘You’re being released. Right here, right now. You’ve got to go.’ I was happy and sad at the same time, knowing I was leaving the guys who had been there for me. I’ve been there for them—but I’ve received from them as much as I’ve given. I’m still in shock.” Carlos described the mixed feelings of gratitude for the support and concern for people still in detention. “I am full of gratitude. I am honored. I can feel the love. But I am also carrying pain and guilt—because not all of us have the community behind us.”

**Pastor Josh Gill** of Central Presbyterian Church in Downingtown said that he first learned about the Della Valle story online last fall and shared their story in a sermon the following Sunday. “The question I asked my congregation was, ‘How are you going to love your neighbor in this moment?’ Carlos is from Downingtown. He is our neighbor.” Pastor Gill added, “It wasn’t just my congregation. The Lutheran, AME, Methodist, and UU churches, the Quakers, our Jewish brothers and sisters—we all came together because none of us wanted to see this family separated.”

**Erica Dueso**, Mayor of Downingtown, Pennsylvania, where the Della Valles live, described the city as “the good neighbor community, not the good citizen community. We fight for all of our good neighbors to live and flourish in our town. I have been advocating for Carlos and his family since before I was even elected, because this was never about politics—it was about a neighbor who needed help. Today, we celebrate for Carlos. Tomorrow, we keep working for everyone else.”

During a recent meeting in Pennsylvania with Hispanic business and community leaders about workforce challenges and immigration reform, hosted by the American Business Immigration Coalition, Senator Dave McCormick met with Mrs. Angela Della Valle and learned about the immigration enforcement activity involving her husband, Carlos Della Valle. Following this meeting, Senator McCormick and his team have been closely monitoring and actively engaged with the Department of Homeland Security regarding this case. On Tuesday evening (April 28), Senator McCormick’s office was notified of Mr. Della Valle’s release from the ICE detention facility. The office said they welcomed this decision.

Carlos and Angela will return to their home in Pennsylvania while they continue to comply with all legal requirements and pursue pathways to legal status. A full video of the press conference is available on [American Families United’s Facebook page](#), including remarks from advocate Vicky Lavino, family friends Stephen and Missy Dow, and family members Deanna and Ryan Brown.

**American Families United** empowers American families to tell their stories and reform the immigration system through education and advocacy so U.S. citizens and their immigrant spouses can stay together and raise their children with security in the country they all love.

The **American Business Immigration Coalition** is a bipartisan coalition of 1,700+ CEOs, business owners, and trade associations across 17 mostly red and purple states. ABIC promotes commonsense immigration reform that advances economic competitiveness, provides companies with the talent they need, and allows the integration of immigrants into our economy as consumers, workers, entrepreneurs, and citizens.

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