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Md. County To Pay Salvadoran Man For Handing Him To ICE

By **Micah Danney**

Law360 (May 31, 2023, 6:27 PM EDT) -- Howard County, Maryland, has agreed to pay a Salvadoran man to settle allegations it violated his constitutional rights and its own policies by delivering him to immigration authorities after a traffic stop, his attorneys said Wednesday.

William Garcia Trejo agreed to drop his **suit** after he and the county negotiated a "monetary resolution," according to one of his attorneys, Drew LaFramboise, who declined to comment on its amount.

"It was one that the parties entered into amicably and based on mutual agreement, and it's one that we think will allow Mr. Trejo and his family to move forward from this really unfortunate and tragic case," LaFramboise said.

He added that his client and team are proud of the case, which they believe has led to "some change" in the county, saying they hope it will spare others from experiencing what Trejo went through.

Trejo sued Howard County, its county executive and two directors of the Howard County Department of Corrections a year ago for transferring him to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after his overnight detention in 2020 for minor traffic infractions. A state trooper had pulled Trejo over and arrested him for failing to appear in court to answer charges of driving with an expired registration and without a license.

Trejo's family had already posted a \$400 bond for his release when the county handed him over to ICE, which Trejo alleged amounted to an unlawful second arrest. The county had also stated that it would only transfer immigrants who were accused of serious offenses, he said, and the agency had not issued a detainer or administrative warrant for him.

Trejo alleged the county's actions resulted in his being forced to wear a GPS monitor, required to regularly check in with ICE agents and be exposed to the threat of deportation. LaFramboise told Law360 last year that Trejo's loss of liberty has had a "profound psychological impact" on him, all for minor traffic infractions and his improper transferral to ICE.

On Wednesday, LaFramboise said Trejo is still under surveillance and suffering the consequences of the county's actions.

"Nonetheless, the resolution of the civil action will be important for Mr. Trejo to move his life forward in a positive way and recover from this," he said.

Under the agreement, the county did not admit any liability, although county executive Calvin Ball had called Trejo's transfer a "mistake" that "should not have occurred," according to the complaint. The suit had sought \$5 million for each count of wrongdoing and had asked the court to bar the county from further misconduct.

Trejo had alleged Howard County had a history of reporting immigrants to ICE over minor offenses. His case's outcome has the potential to alter the county's practices and send a message to other municipalities, LaFramboise said.

"I think it's a really important case, not just locally, but I think on a broader national level. And I think it has serious implications," he said.

A representative for Howard County did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

Trejo is represented by Timothy Maloney and Drew LaFramboise of Joseph Greenwald & Laake PA and Victor Ramirez of the Law Office of Victor Ramirez LLC.

The defendants are represented by Gary W. Kuc and Cynthia Peltzman of the Howard County Office of Law.

The case is Trejo v. Howard County et al., case number 8:22-cv-01066, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.

--Additional reporting by Alyssa Aquino. Editing by Daniel King.

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