



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 29, 2017

**Contact:** Carly Fox: 585-500-9409

**Who:** Community members, faith leaders, students and staff at SUNY Geneseo

**What:** Rally to free José Coyote Pérez and others held indefinitely without bond

**When:** Thursday March 30, 8:45 am

**Where: Batavia:** The Buffalo Federal Detention Center, 4250 Federal Drive, Batavia, NY

## **Community members, faith groups and labor rally in support of area immigrant farmworker leader detained by ICE**

*Rochester area residents and community supporters of long-time farm worker activist say “Estamos con José / We are with José”*

Rochester --A cross-section of faith, labor, university and immigrant rights groups will rally in support of a farmworker activist who has been held in the immigration detention facility in Batavia for the past five weeks, months after his case had been closed.

On February 24, Immigration authorities detained José Coyote Pérez. He is a long-time advocate for farm workers in western New York and has lived in Livingston County for 17 years. After he reported an altercation with a co-worker to the police, ICE officials asked him to come in for a meeting. Previously ICE had administratively closed José's case in September 2016, and he was given a Social Security number and a permit to work in the U.S. He went to the appointment as he always has when called in. This time, however, he was detained without bail. Today is his bail hearing.

José has four children, three of whom are US citizens, and he has worked in the NYS dairy industry for 15 years. He is a community leader who has been active with the Worker Justice Center of New York and the Workers' Center of Central New York as an advocate for the rights of farm and dairy workers regardless of their immigration status. He has been leading the campaign in NY to win drivers licenses for all.

Community members will gather in front of the immigration detention facility in Batavia in a vigil to be led by faith leaders immediately before José's 9 AM bond hearing. If José is given a bond amount he can pay, he will be able to return home while his case proceeds. The group demands that José and others unfairly caught up in stepped-up immigration enforcement actions be released on bonds that are affordable enough for them to pay. None of the recent cases of immigrants detained, including José's, involve people who have a criminal record or who pose a flight risk.

**Jose Coyote Perez:** “Last September a judge administratively closed my case, and I had so much hope to finally be a part of the community – I had a work permit, I was about to get my driver's license, I was part of the community and represented my colleagues and I felt free finally, after living in fear for so long. People know me, I speak up, I am not hiding, and when they called me to go in and sign I went, I didn't hide. It is so upsetting what is happening to immigrants. I've been here in jail for more than a month, without the chance to see a judge, and I don't know why, not even my lawyer knows why. I have gotten phone calls, visits, the organizations I am a member of and even the students at Geneseo too. This is what keeps me strong, the people who are fighting for me and helping me.”