

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 24, 2016

President Barack Obama  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to ask for a meeting to urge you to exercise your constitutional power to grant immediate release to Oscar López Rivera, who is serving a disproportionate sentence of 70 years, and who has served more than 34 years, though he was never convicted of hurting or killing anyone.

You know how strongly we feel about this issue, as each of us has personally expressed it to you. You also know how strongly the governor of Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican legislature and civil society feel about this as the governor and many in his administration have expressed it to you and representatives of your administration. A uniquely broad consensus has been forged among people who hold divergent political views.

Several of us were involved in the campaign for his release and that of his co-defendants, which resulted in President Clinton's 1999 historic commutation, which your Attorney General Eric Holder not only contemporaneously supported in the Clinton Justice Department, but affirmed during his 2009 confirmation hearings.

There is strong support for his release in the U.S., including the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, SEIU, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the New York City Council, and the Hispanic National Bar Association. Puerto Rican communities throughout the country and Puerto Rican elected officials also widely support his release.

The international community feels strongly as well that Mr. López Rivera be released. You will recall that the President of Uruguay addressed this when he was a guest at the White House. The presidents and representatives of other Latin American countries have urged his release in international forums from the United Nations General Assembly to regional organizations. The U.N. Decolonization Committee has repeatedly adopted resolutions urging his release.

We and Mr. López Rivera's counsel have provided vast documentation of this broad support to the various Pardon Attorneys since 2010. It is unlikely that any petition for Executive Clemency has ever accumulated the amount of support as has Mr. López Rivera's.

Mr. President, you have articulated a wise, healthy policy in support of giving people serving disproportionate sentences a second chance, recognizing that the constitutional power of pardon is the correct remedy. You have to date responsibly commuted many disproportionate sentences of drug offenders and others – and we have seen that public reaction has been favorable, and indeed critical only of the fact that you have not issued more such commutations.

As we see it, there is no legitimate penological objective being served by the ongoing imprisonment of this 73 year old Puerto Rican, when his people and others who value human rights clamor for his release.

We hope you will meet with us to explore his case further, to afford us the opportunity to talk with you about giving him a second chance. We will gladly make ourselves available at your earliest convenience. Thank you, Mr. President.

Sincerely,



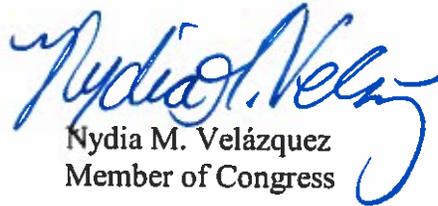
Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Member of Congress



Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
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