



HISPANIC NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION

The National Voice of the Hispanic Legal Community

President

Cynthia D. Mares

Hon. Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

August 3, 2015

President-Elect

Robert T. Maldonado

Executive Director

Alba Cruz-Hacker

Re: Statement in the Support of Commuting the Sentence of Oscar López Rivera

General Counsel

Rafael Zahraiddin

Dear President Obama:

Finance Director

Meshach Rhoades

The Hispanic National Bar Association urges President Obama to exercise his constitutional power to commute the 55 year sentence of Puerto Rican activist Oscar López Rivera and grant his immediate release. López Rivera, who is 72 years old, has served 34 years of his prison sentence, 13 of which have been in solitary confinement. A Vietnam veteran who earned a Bronze Star for bravery, López Rivera, was a housing activist and helped found the first Latino cultural center in Chicago. He was not charged and convicted of a violent crime, but instead incarcerated for seditious conspiracy and later for conspiracy to escape.

Treasurer

Juan Vasquez, Jr.

Secretary

*Rosevelie Marquez
Morales*

Mr. López Rivera was connected to a Puerto Rican nationalist group, FALN, but he was never charged with any of the bombings attributed to the FALN in the 1970s and 1980s. Notably, a 1980 Chicago Tribune editorial noted that even those bombs placed in the Chicago area, where López Rivera lived, were “placed and timed to damage property rather than persons.” Data demonstrates that around that time, the average sentence for homicide was less than 12 and a half years. As an organization representing the interests of attorneys, judges, legal professionals, and the Latino community, the HNBA is charged with upholding the United States Constitution, including the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against excessive and disproportionate punishment.

VP Programs

Jennifer Trusso

VP Regions

Jaime Areizaga-Soto

The HNBA joins Nobel laureates Desmond Tutu, Mairead Maguire, Former President Jimmy Carter, the government of Puerto Rico, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the American Association of Jurists, the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of State, Councils, and Municipal Employees, and others in requesting the Presidential commutation of the sentence of Oscar López Rivera and his immediate release.

VP External Affairs

John Arrastia

**VP Sections &
Committees**

Elizabeth Krupa

VP Membership

Anjanette Cabrera

Sincerely,

Cynthia D. Mares
National President
Hispanic National Bar Association