

#221
Proposed Resolution

SEIU 2016 International Convention

Detroit, Michigan

May 22-24, 2016

Resolution in Support of the Release of Oscar López Rivera

35 Years is Long Enough!

Submitted by 1199 United Healthcare Workers East (UHE)

WHEREAS, Oscar LOPEZ Rivera, a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, returned to the Puerto Rican community of Chicago to become a successful community organizer and help improve conditions in education, housing and employment;

WHEREAS, in May 1981, he was arrested, along with 14 other men and women, and was convicted of seditious conspiracy and related offenses, yet he nor any of his co-defendants was convicted of harming or killing anyone;

WHEREAS, in 1999, as a result of an international campaign for their release, President Clinton commuted the sentences of most of these men and women. The President offered to commute Oscar's sentence after he served another 10 years in prison. In solidarity with those not included in the commutation, Oscar declined:

Whereas, all those released are living productive, law-abiding lives. Oscar is the only one of his co-defendants still behind bars;

WHEREAS, at 73 years old, he is the longest held political prisoner in the history of Puerto Rico. He has served more time than the South African leader Nelson Mandela;

WHEREAS, in Puerto Rico several former governors, to include Rafael Hernandez Colon, Sila Maria Calderón, Anibal Acevedo Vila, and the current governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla, have all requested in writing the immediate release of Oscar Lopez Rivera. Both the current Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner to the US Congress, Pedro Pierluissi, and the Mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulin Cruz, have taken similar positions; and the Puerto Rico Senate and House of Representatives have also weighed in on the issue by passing resolutions in their respective bodies in favor of Oscar Lopez Rivera's release;

WHEREAS, the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization has adopted resolutions every year for the past 16 years, calling on the President of the United States to release Oscar López Rivera;

WHEREAS, AFSCME, LCLAA, and the Puerto Rico AFL-CIO have all passed similar resolutions in their respective conventions;

Be IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the 2016 SEIU Convention calls on the President of the United States of America to exercise his constitutional power of pardon, and grant the immediate and unconditional release of Oscar López Rivera

Approved by the 1199SEIU Executive Council on March 18, 2016.