

SCOTT GARRETT
5TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN
CAPITAL MARKETS, INSURANCE, AND
GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ENTERPRISES
SUBCOMMITTEE

BUDGET COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION CAUCUS
CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3005

May 13, 2011

2244 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4465

266 HARRISTOWN ROAD
SUITE 104
GLEN ROCK, NJ 07452
(201) 444-5454

83 SPRING STREET
NEWTON, NJ 07860
(973) 300-2000

www.house.gov/Garrett

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As the Administration continues to formulate its policy and approach to Cuba, we write to inform you of our belief that it should make the extradition of Joanne Chesimard a top priority. As you know, Joanne Chesimard, also known as Assata Shakur, has been convicted of murdering New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster and is currently receiving asylum in Cuba. We believe that the administration should renew its efforts to extradite Ms. Chesimard and assure that justice is served.

According to court testimony, New Jersey State Troopers stopped James Costan in 1973 for driving a vehicle with a broken tail light and slightly exceeding the speed limit. When Mr. Costan was asked to exit the vehicle to explain a discrepancy on his photo identification, passenger Joanne Chesimard pulled out a gun and shot Trooper Foerster. In the ensuing firefight, Trooper Foerster was killed.

In 1977, Ms. Chesimard was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. After serving only two years of her sentence, she successfully escaped from the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey. She eventually reappeared in Cuba in the 1980s. According to authorities, she had been granted political asylum by the former Cuban president, Fidel Castro. New Jersey officials have made several attempts to extradite Ms. Chesimard, but their efforts have been unsuccessful. Ms. Chesimard is currently one of the Top Ten "Featured Fugitives" on the Federal Bureau of Investigations' Domestic Terrorism List.

On September 14, 1998, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed H.Con.Res. 254, a resolution calling on the Government of Cuba to "extradite to the United States convicted felon Joanne Chesimard and all other individuals who have fled the United States to avoid prosecution or confinement for criminal offenses and who are currently living freely in Cuba." The Senate passed H.Con.Res. 254 on October 21, 1998 by Unanimous Consent. Over a decade later, Ms. Chesimard remains a fugitive and Cuban leaders refuse to cooperate with U.S. officials who seek her extradition.

By aiding a convicted murderer, Cuba has insulted not only the state of New Jersey, but also the U.S. legal system and U.S. law enforcement officers. We strongly request that you emphasize the importance of making Ms. Chesimard's extradition one of the prerequisites for achieving normal diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Sincerely,

Scott Garrett

Donald L. Rose NJ 7

T. The Cotton (MI-11)

Fattah-Hashky NC-10

Shelley Moore Capito

J. H. [unclear] MS-3

Chris Smith

[unclear] FL-25

Mike Kelly

SLT [unclear]

[unclear]

[unclear]

[unclear]

[unclear] TX-19

[unclear]

Lou Barletta PA-11

[unclear]

Michael A. Grimm

Frank Pallone Jr.

Beck [unclear]